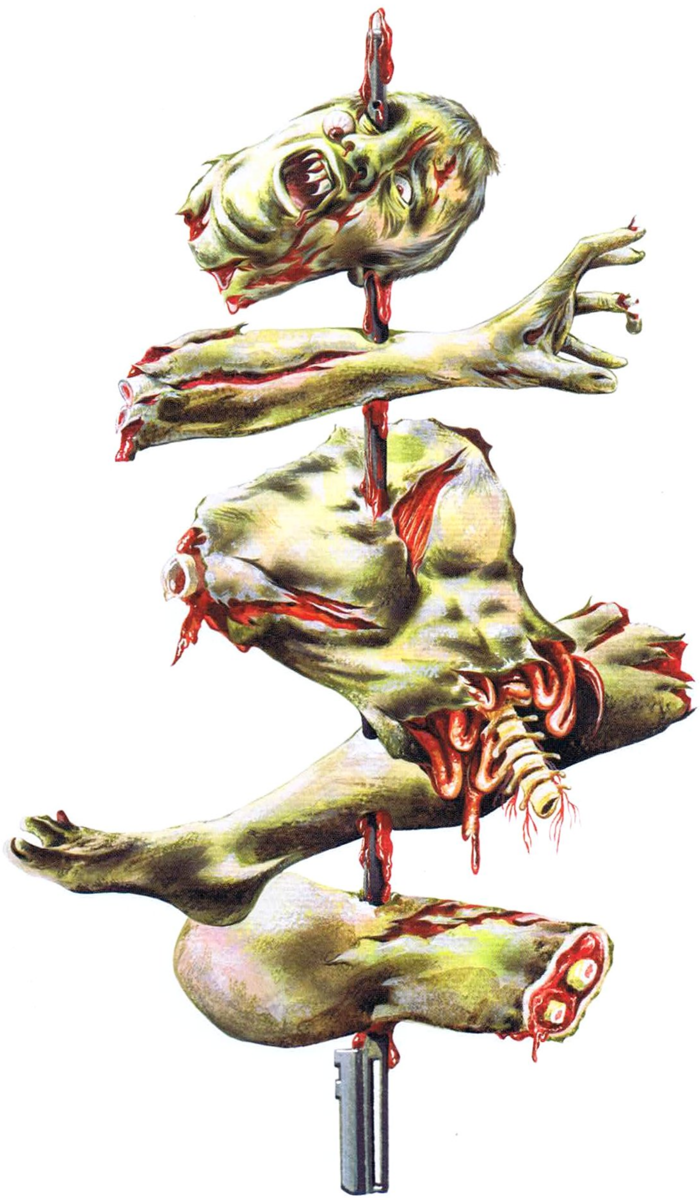


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ISSUE #118
APRIL 2006 / £3.99
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Wild World
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FIRST UK REVIEW!
SONIC RIDERS™
F-Zero for hedgehogs? Sonic's fastest game exposed!
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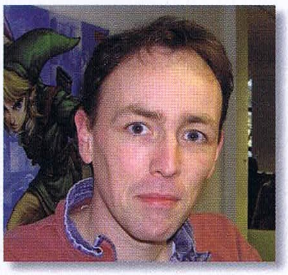
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gamesradar.com

CRASH & BURN



While playing *Sonic Riders* this month, I was reminded of the time I tried to achieve Sonic-like speed on my bike, which didn't have any gears. After getting a push-start down Helmshore's steepest hill, I tucked my elbows in for maximum aerodynamic effect and wiped out on a kerb, mere moments before I would have become the first boy in Lancashire to break the sound barrier. By the time my mum came to retrieve my shattered body, the remains of my bike had twice been run over by the neighbour's Ford Cortina.

And the moral of this tragic story? I'm not quite sure, but five successive falls off a blind, barrierless corner in *Riders* brought back the exact same feeling I had when I gazed at the twisted pile of metal that used to be my best-ever Christmas present.

Repressed psychological torment aside, this month has been a whirlwind of strange DS games and, erm, *FIFA Street 2*. That's not the reason this issue arrives to you a week later than originally planned, although it would have been nice to delay it slightly longer, so we could tell you all about the exciting news that's scheduled to break about a day after the magazine hits the shelves. Ho hum. Keep your eyes on the internet, then, and I'll see you back here on April 27th for a full, frank and devastatingly funny* analysis of what may well turn out to be the second most interesting announcement of the year.

If it happens. Fingers crossed…

MARTIN KITTS

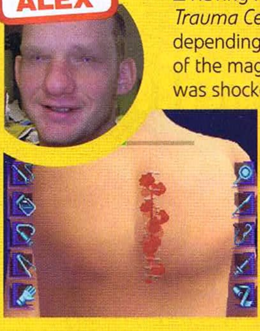


SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Head over to page 53 to see how you can get **NGC** delivered direct to your door, before it hits the news stands. Plus you get a free Pokémon card game thing! Yow!

TURN OVER THE PAGE!
Head over to page 6 now for the all the latest Revolution gossip

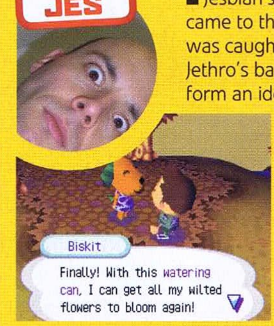
THIS MONTH WE HAVE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYING…

ALEX



■ Having honed his skills in *Trauma Centre* (or *Center*, depending on which page of the mag you trust) Alex was shocked to find himself in a teeny spot of bother with the law. "One kidney, it was just one measly kidney, your honour," pleaded our favourite amateur surgeon.

JES



■ Jesbian's fluffy nature came to the fore when he was caught (again) in Farmer Jethro's barn, attempting to form an idealistic socialist society using commercial livestock. "Orville was right," he wailed, as the police carted him away. "*Animal Crossing* is more equal than us all!"

GREENER



■ In a typically conscientious effort to expand his retro knowledge, Greener tracked down the original Soviet *Tetris*. And because no modern computers will run it, he programmed *his own brain* to process Russian machine code. At least that's what he told us.

* Devastating funniness dependent on availability of jokes. Funnability Index may go down as well as up, and NGC Magazine accepts no liability for mental anguish caused by mirth failure on the part of its writers.

NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!

1

PAGE 12



ODAMA

PINBALL WIZARD

But they're not wizards – they're samurai! Madness.

2

PAGE 34



AC: WILD WORLD

MONSTERS!

Live with beast-headed people – on your DS! Terrifying but brilliant, *Animal Crossing* hits the UK.

SONIC RIDERS

Go hog wild with Sonic's new 'boarding beauty!

PAGE 24





FREAKS!
MOMMA WON'T KISS 'EM
Dare you peek behind the curtain at Nintendo's least-loveable characters?



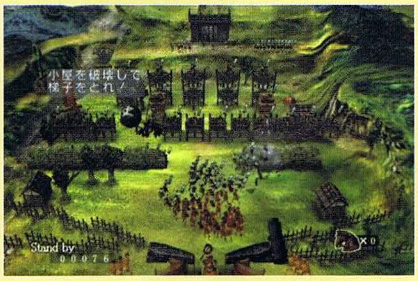
RESI EVIL DS
COMPLETE TIPS GUIDE!
Make the dead deader than they already are – and beat the game! Swank.

TIMEWARP
OLD GAMES HERE
More scrapings from Greener's medulla oblongata. He's literally got a brain full of games.



WHAT'S IN NGC?
Cast your viewing orbs downwards to find out what's in the issue. Bongo!

PREVIEWS
We'd review them, but they aren't finished yet.









NEWS
Or, by the time it's been on the internet, 'olds'.

OTHER STUFF
A mystery grab-bag of fruity goodness.



REVIEWS
Verdicts a-plenty on all this month's new releases.

OUR PROMISE

In order to get the most up-to-date gossip to you, we keep our news pages open right till the last minute. We suspect that this month we'll be forced to sprint to the printers with them in a high-speed relay and, if you've ever seen games journalists running, you'll realise what a terrifying prospect this is. If you're reading these words now, at least you know that we fought the good fight. Let's just hope no lives were lost.



NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK

IN NEWS THIS MONTH



MEET MOTHER
ONLY NINE YEARS LATE!
P8



USE THE FORCE
ISN'T IT?
P8

PLUS!
WRITE YOU ARE!
P9
AND MORE...

NINTENDO CONFIRMS NET AND TV ON DS

It's a June release for Opera in Japan.

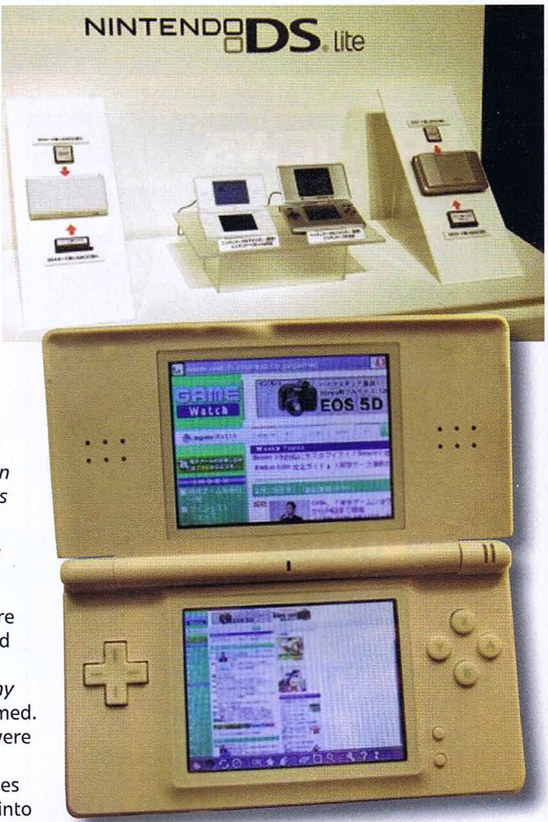
It's the news we've been expecting for some time: Nintendo have finally signed a deal to bring dual-windowed web browsing to DS owners in Japan this June, although no date has been confirmed for the system's release over here just yet.

Using a recent press event in Tokyo initially designed to show off the glories of the newly unveiled DS Lite, Masaru Shimomura, Deputy General Manager of Nintendo's R & D department, revealed that they had decided to use the Opera web browser to allow gamers to surf the net wirelessly by including the technology on a DS cart: "Opera exceeded our expectations with its user-friendly interface, quick access to sites and ease of use, as well as making the best use of the Nintendo DS system's unique double screens and touch screen features".

The browser is expected to be released in Japan around June and offers the choice between viewing pages across both screens or or else surfing around the lower screen with the stylus, zooming in on certain sections of each page. And while the browser will cost 3,800 yen (about £18) in Japan, what it will cost in these islands remains a mystery.

Also, using the same game slot as the browser, there will be an external TV tuner and aerial. Created in conjunction with Japanese audio and digital provider 1Seg, the TV signal will be broadcast in screen-filling 320x240 resolution using MPEG2 technology. However, if the product is to appear over here, then Nintendo would need a similar UK partner to provide the pictures.

With the audience still captivated by those two devices, Nintendo also took the chance to reveal that DS versions of Konami's *Pro Evolution Soccer*, *Super Robot Wars* and *Dynasty Warriors* are also in development. While that trio remained in seclusion, *Children of Mana* and *XenoSaga* were shown in video form, and a *Brain Training* based spin-off called *Calligraphy Training* was also confirmed. Sadly no release dates were forthcoming, which just leaves us wishing our lives away until E3 shimmies into view with all the answers to our questions.

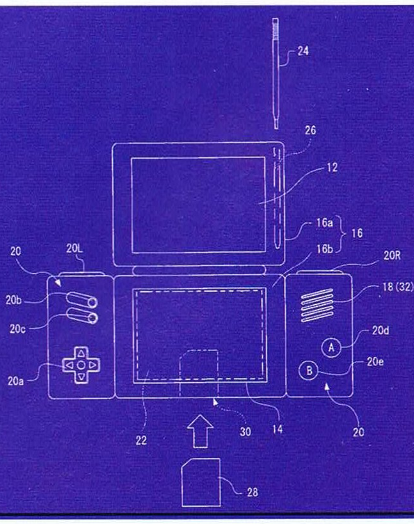


△ **This year, the internet; next year, inner space and brainwaves.**

A TOUCH FAMILIAR

Mere days after unveiling the new DS Lite, Nintendo trundled down to the US patent office to register another sexy shape for its handheld. But somehow it looks very familiar, especially when compared to our 2003 mock-up of the original DS. Is it a case of great minds thinking alike? Probably not, as Nintendo's DS patent is for a machine that can read two styluses touching the screen at once and calculate the distance and angle between them. Probably in readiness for a trigonometry round in the sadly inevitable *Mario Party DS*.





NGC READERSHIP SURVEY 2006



WIN! A Sony 32" LCD HD-ready TV worth over £1,000!

Here at **NGC**, we want to ensure we continue to provide you with the best Nintendo magazine around. So we'd like to find out more about you, your gaming habits and what you think about us. Once you've finished reading this issue just go to:

www.gamesurvey.co.uk

and enter the password: **mb5** to fill in our online survey.

As a special thank you, all completed surveys submitted by 8th May 2006 will be entered into a prize draw with a chance toincreased the win a fantastic Sony KDL-S32A12U 32" LCD HD-ready TV. Beautiful, it is.

Please be honest – your answers don't affect your chances of winning, and we want to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the warts-and-all truth.

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MARBLE MADNESS

Nintendo proffers pinball popping in Puzzloop.

The simple ones are often the best, and the idea behind *Puzzloop* is pretty obvious. In this DS-only puzzler, a gang of marbles must be driven off by being blasted with spheroids of exactly the same shade. Of course, there is a twist to the *Bust-A-Move*-alike action and it comes in the shape of the ever-turning path that the balls take in rolling towards the goal, which just happens to be next to your bubble gun.

Controlled entirely with the stylus and saddled with the name of *Magnetica* in the US, *Puzzloop* will be released here in June.



△ Up top, a bonus slot machine.



△ The same idea is shared by *Zuma* on mobile phones and Xbox 360.



△ Match three spheres and they all go pop. Match four spheres and you get Tasered.

MOTHER 3 ACTUALLY EXISTS

Long lost RPG loses a dimension in GBA form.

A mere nine years after first appearing in issue 1 of *N64* and less than a month before it hits Japanese shelves, Shigesato Itoi has decided that it is once again time for the world to see his turn-based GBA RPG *Mother 3*.

As you might guess for a game that has been delayed, then cancelled, then resurrected, then delayed once again, things have changed since we first caught a glimpse of the turn-based adventure. For a start, it's obviously changed from a 3D adventure on the N64DD to become 2D once again on the GBA. So far, it also seems to be devoid of any of the familiar faces such as Ness and Jeff, although that may change.

We say 'so far' because Itoi-san has decided to taunt us all by drip-feeding information through his website, so far revealing only the motto (Strange, Funny, Heart-rending), the music in ringtone form and the *Mother 3* 18,000 yen GB Micro included inside the Delxue Box.

The drips will pool into one big puddle when the game is finally released in Japan on 20th April, even if the UK and US are still waiting to hear if the game known as *Earthbound* in the west will ever surface.

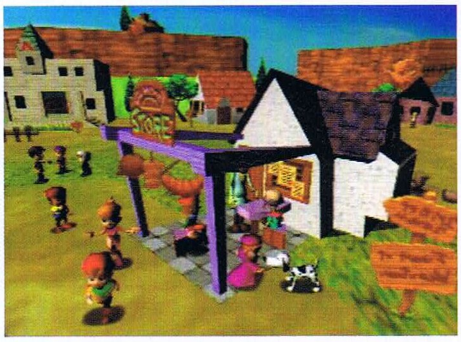


△ It all looks normal. Does it look normal to you?



△ These sketches date back to the autumn. Of 1997.

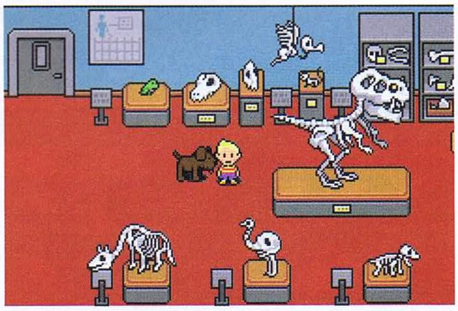




△ The N64 version was canned due to soaring costs.



△ If elephants never forget, where'd the game go?



△ Wanted, dead or alive: *Mother*, your time is up.

TREK'S NEXT GENERATION

Boldly going on...

Bethesda Softworks, the new holders of the Trek license have unveiled *Star Trek: Tactical Assault* for DS. Set in the original 60s universe of Kirk, Spock and stretch lycra, the ship-set-shooter will include two campaigns and head to head WiFi battling. It will be launched in the summer.

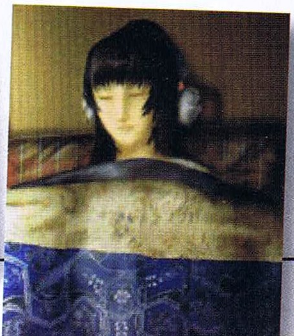


NINJA NUT

Tiny samurai infest DS. Blimey!

Well-regarded Playstation samurai stealth-a-thon *Tenchu* is coming to the DS. Subtitled *Dark Shadow* – nice to see more subtitles shoehorning themselves into the DS template – it's out in Japan in April, from From Software (confusing use of a double 'from', there). It'll apparently offer three playable characters and a bunch of new ninja skills, one of which is called, brilliantly, 'biting'. Wonder what it could be? There's no news as yet of a European release, but hopefully it'll get one. We'll certainly be checking it out on import review come April, anyway.







WRITE YOU ARE

It's back! The chance to write your own reviews for NGC…

MARIO AND LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME



Classic recipe for the perfect RPG, as concocted by Nintendo and Alphadream Corporation: take one old, tiresome RPG genre. Add two of the world's most popular plumbers. Incorporate time travel, thus making four plumbers (well, they're babies and don't have jobs yet). Mix in a hilarious plotline, making you desperate to play it more. Create an amazing, FUN turn-based battle system. Stir well. Leave in oven for two hours. Finally, liberally sprinkle with classic Nintendo magic. Voila! The perfect RPG!

Storyline? Professor E Gadd creates a time machine, and Princess Peach decides to visit the Past Mushroom Kingdom. When the machine returns minus one fire-breathing-dinosaur-prone Princess, Mario and Luigi go back in time. They team up with Baby Mario and Baby Luigi, ready to beat the evil Shroob alien race – Baby Bowser even helps you slightly. I won't spoil it, but the ending had me in tears.

But what's best, it ALL feels Mario-ish. Every room, every cameo, every battle is typical Mario, and it rewards you for being a fan. And THAT makes a great game.

Rathe Temple-Green, St Leonards-On-Sea

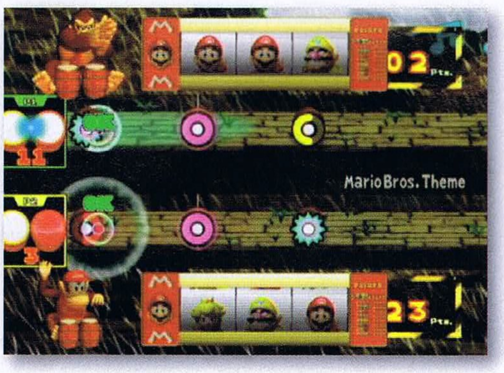
VERDICT 97

We Say: Spot on! It *is* a great game. But is it really as good as *Resident Evil 4*, score-wise?

NGC said 90

"It's all we could have asked for."

DONKEY KONGA



It was on my 18th birthday that I received these bongos of madness. Naturally, being surrounded by a load of drunken friends, there was a period of silent wonder when the game was loaded for the first time. Wonder soon turned to laughter when the first sounds of '99 Red Balloons' came blaring from the television speakers, and the sight of me attempting to be rhythmic whilst tapping a large pair of novelty bongos was apparently surprisingly intoxicating. Playing the damn thing, on the other hand, was a different matter entirely; trying to appear competent yet cool is rather hard to pull off during *DK*, and thus my first experience of the game wasn't all that fun. However, there was a certain allurement present, and upon playing for a second time I saw the light. I didn't care how I looked; I just focused on the experience itself and drummed away. The joy of *DK* is in the atmosphere of fun it creates and the craziness of the resulting competitiveness that ensues, and with enough friends and alcohol present, it's sure to provide you with a night's worth of fantastic entertainment. Bangin', you could say.

Aidan Moss, Worcester

VERDICT 75

We Say: A balanced and effective review. We're not sure 'allurement' is a word, though…

NGC said 88

"You are going to *love* this."

STAR FOX: ASSAULT



Star Fox has always been known for intense action, fast-paced flying levels and fun-but-shallow multiplayer. And what does *Assault* do? It gets them the wrong way round! All of a sudden, the multiplayer is brilliant fun, offering a decent level of depth for those willing to explore it, and a shallow, not to mention short, single player game.

The single player removes Fox from his Arwing, but at least he has a gun rather than a stick, right? Wrong. While Fox has his blaster, and many other weapons, the game feels loose and lacks any feeling of impact, enemies die pathetically, and pose little to no challenge. The flying levels are a step up, but are too few and far between to save the experience.

In contrast to this, the multiplayer offers a nicely customisable game. When only one vehicle is available, it is fairly drab, but when offered the choice between weapons, vehicles and power ups the game comes alive. And if *Smash Bros* can get away with being considered brilliant several years since release purely on multiplayer, why can't this?

James Bowden, Waterlooville

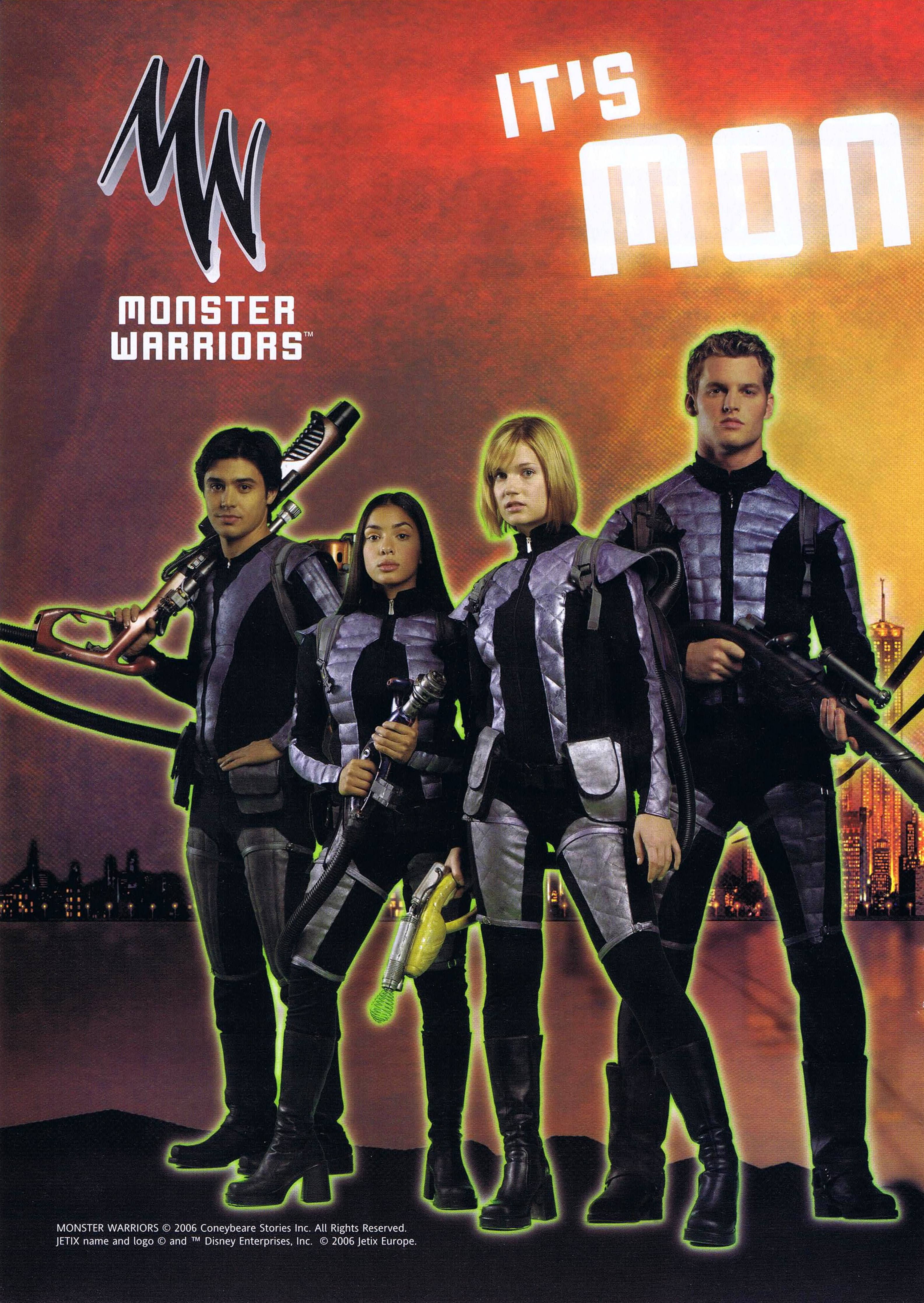
VERDICT 87

We Say: An interesting angle, but we feel the multiplayer can't hold a candle to *Smash Bros*…

NGC said 73

"Struggles to impress on any level."

Think we've scored a game wrongly, or do you just want to share your love of the latest big thing? No matter what your reasons, scribble a 200 word review and either email it to us at NGC@futurenet.co.uk, or send it to the following address. We'll print the best ones we receive in every issue. Get writing!
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ODAMA DRAMA
Odama was first unveiled waaaay back at E3 2004, where it didn't use the microphone at all. Interestingly, however, it did use the *Donkey Konga* bongos – hitting them inspired your army and demoralised the enemy. We don't know if you can still use the bongos now, however...



△ Pinballs and war – together at last!





△ Feudal Japan was of course noted for using enormous stone flippers on the battlefield.



ODAMA

Crush your enemies with a giant pinball, just like they used to do in ancient Japan.

We've seen some odd sights in our time. Babies in a pram being pulled along by a giant Chain Chomp in *Mario Kart*? Didn't bat an eyelid. Cleaning the teeth of a giant underwater eel in *Mario Sunshine*? As normal as a cup of tea. Whacking bongos to make a virtual gorilla slap a giant chicken silly? As regular as *Coronation Street*. But *Odama*... well, *Odama* is just really frickin' weird.

It's essentially a military strategy game, pitting one massive army against another – with a gigantic pinball. This pinball – the eponymous Odama – is naturally used to crush the enemy via giant flippers, but the catch is that it can flatten your own troops as well as the bad guys. Which is where the Gamecube microphone comes in: it'll be bundled with the game and you can use it to shout 11 different orders at your own men (mostly "get out of the way!", we assume) in order to attack the enemy and swamp their encampment. To do this you use the Odama to shatter the enemy gates, which lie at the far end of the playing area. Complexity is introduced here, in that you need to get a squad of men carrying a giant bell (of course) through the breached fortifications, whereupon victory awaits, like a particularly delicious cake.

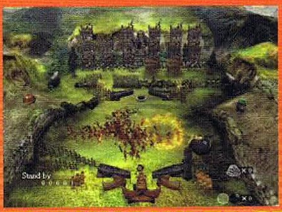
Splendidly, the game will also come with a clip, so you can attach the microphone to the Gamecube controller. It's activated by pressing X, and having to hold both the mic and controller at the same time would be madness, as full use is made of the controller: L and R are used to control the flippers, the analogue stick tilts the playing field, and pressing Z calls for reinforcements. It'll be a little like using the mic that attached to the N64 controller for *Hey You, Pikachu*, we imagine (although *Odama* will surely work properly with the mic, as anyone with memories of Pika's stubborn refusal to do anything you ask may recall).

Ultimately, the game splits your brain down the middle by asking you to do two very different things: marshal your men and use them strategically in a *Pikmin*-style fashion, and flip the Odama around as if you were playing a regular pinball game, while of course attempting not to squash your own army into a bloody mess in the process.

It's unusual, exacting, and a lot of fun. The fact that the game is set in feudal Japan makes it all the odder; and yet, somehow, it all makes a curious kind of sense. While it's not the most visually advanced game we've ever seen (check out the little stick men), the style of the game is certainly individual and atmospheric, and it throws lots of soldiers around with aplomb.

We never thought a game this unique would make it over here, but a June release has been confirmed. We'll hopefully have a review of the Japanese version in the next issue. Frankly, we're very excited indeed.

"IT'S ESSENTIALLY A MILITARY STRATEGY GAME – ONE THAT USES A GIGANTIC PINBALL"



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **A strange mix of real-time strategy and pinball. Yes, pinball.**
- **Use the Gamecube microphone to shout orders at your troops.**
- **The Odama is the pinball itself, a sacred object and legendary weapon. Or so it says here.**

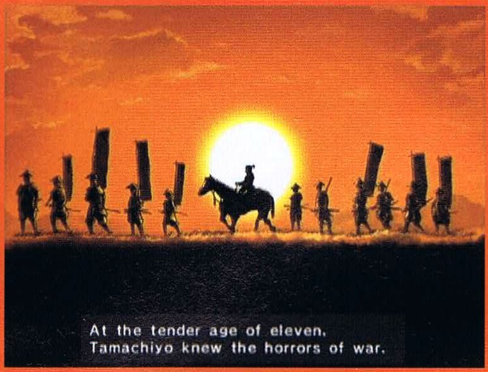
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Vivarium

What have they done before?
Seaman
(Not reviewed)
Ultra-weird Dreamcast pet sim, with a horribly disturbing fish-man. A *fish-man*!

THE STORY SO FAR...

You might think a game that sports a giant pinball crushing samurai warriors wouldn't need any kind of substantial storyline behind it, but then you'd be wronger than a baby oil-smeared Tingle wearing a bikini. Behold!



WAR HORROR!

■ Poor old Yamanouchi Kagetora is a young general struggling to preserve his clan. He also wants to protect 'the way of Ninten' (cough), a particular philosophy.



BALLS!

■ Luckily, young master Kagetora discovers that his philosophy can be protected by using a hoofing great pinball to squash his enemies into bloody smears.



REVENGE!

■ Still, bugger the philosophy, Yamanouchi's old man was killed by the villainous Genshin, so it's revenge he's after. Revenge! Revenge with man-flattening ball. Satisfying.



△ Looks like there's plenty of battlefields.



△ Not the dojo! Mother will be so upset.



△ These latest screenshots have certainly seen an improvement in the game's visuals. Not bad, huh?



△ Go, Odama, go! Smash those men to bits.



△ Er... words fail us, here. Some men, bathing. Er.

NGC VERDICT

UK JUNE | US JUNE | JAPAN MAR



Weird but wonderful, *Odama* is possibly the least commerical game we've ever seen, but it's a faultlessly imaginative fusion of strategy and pinball that, amazingly, *works*. It's also good to finally see what appears to be a successul use of the otherwise redundant (hello, *Mario Party 7*) Gamecube microphone.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 **4** 5

HEAVENLY MUZAK

Dan Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code*, apparently used to like making music, and produced a cassette of synth songs with titles like 'Happy Frogs'. Sounds... interesting.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Follows the plot of the film of the book – as Robert Langdon, solve the murder of Jacques Sauniere.
- ...And uncover all manner of conspiracies about the catholic church while you're about it.
- It's probably going to have a few puzzles in it.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
The Collective

What have they done before?
Star Wars Episode III (Not Reviewed)
A PS2/Xbox actioner that was sort of OK, really. A bit. Maybe.



△This is NOT the time for throwing shapes, Mr. Langdon. Good grief, man! You've got a murder to solve! Someone's been killed!

DA VINCI CODE

Apparently based on a book of some sort. Never heard of it.

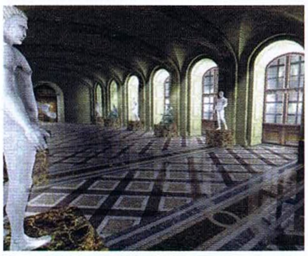
The game of the film of the book is being worked on by Charles Cecil, himself no stranger to religious conspiracies, as he was the man behind the excellent *Broken Sword* series of adventure games. (You may recall the Knights Templar were involved, and they were rather French. The games, that is, not the Knights Templar. Although they were, er, French too. *An-y-waay...*) All of which bodes well for *The Da Vinci Code*, which will no doubt earn a few more dollars for Dan Brown, who is presumably reclining on a chaise longue made of pure gold, cackling madly as the cash pours in and gesturing at J K Rowling with reckless abandon.

Billed as featuring 'action-oriented suspense', *The Da Vinci Code* looks set to be more of a traditional third-person affair than the point-and-click adventures that Cecil is famous for, although given the code-cracking, puzzle-solving plot of the book, it's probably safe to say that the game will sport its fair share of mental workouts. It may be another film-licensed job, but with the pedigree involved in its development, this should be one to watch out for.

> **"IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THE GAME WILL SPORT ITS SHARE OF MENTAL WORKOUTS"**



△The Mona Lisa, yesterday. Painted by some Italian. Caravaggio, was it?



△That's the shiniest floor we've seen for *ages*. Nice buffing, there.

NGC VERDICT

UK SPRING | US SPRING | JAPAN TBA



Surprisingly few details of the game have been released as yet, but seeing as Charles Cecil is involved, we're expecting a good bunch of brain-flexing puzzles. It'd also be fair to say that the game won't feature much in the way of aliens, mutants, laser guns or dinosaurs. Unless there was a chapter in the book that we missed.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 **4** 5

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

Imprisoned simians make a break for freedom!



△ That's what we like to see; he may be trapped in a ball, but you can't squash his spirit. Go, monkey!



△ Monkeys – but not in balls! What in the deuce is going on?

Despite being developed by Traveller's Tales rather than Sega, this latest surprising development of the *Monkey Ball* universe is looking very promising indeed. Essentially, it takes the beautifully precise controls and puzzle-based gameplay of *Super Monkey Ball* and builds a proper story-driven platform game around them. Natty, huh?

There are five kingdoms to progress through, and a number of spells will allow your faeces-flinging friends to give their balls special abilities, all the better to make their way through the world. For instance, you can turn your balls invisible, make them sticky so they can traverse vertical surfaces, make them hover, make them box, or even turn them into wood (we're not sure why, but there must be a good reason for it).

All of which sounds jolly intriguing indeed, but old-style *Monkey Ball* hasn't been forgotten. 50 new puzzle levels make an appearance, and those fantastic party games return in the form of a few old favourites (including Race and Bowling – hooray) and a couple of new additions: the mysterious-sounding Monkey Castles and Monkey Pinball.

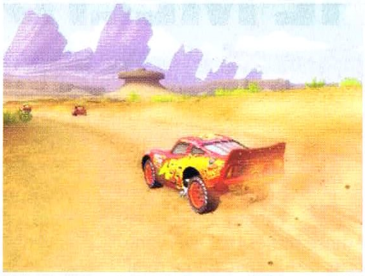
The game isn't out until the Autumn, but we'll hopefully have gotten our filthy mitts on early code by next issue, so we'll let you know how it's shaping up then.



△ The wood ball is for floating, then.

CARS

A game about bikes. No, hang on, that can't be right…



△ A car… in a desert. A *desert*. Why not, eh?

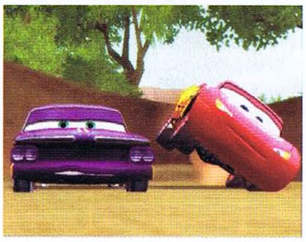


△ Do you think passengers notice the eyes?

Pixar may well be the overlords of the manor when it comes to making animated movies, but they've not had quite as much luck when it comes to the games based on their films. The various *Toy Story* spin-offs, *Finding Nemo*, *The Incredibles*… not exactly *GoldenEye* quality, were they? But who knows, *Cars* might just be the game that will most accurately reflect the quality of the original film.

Based on the upcoming flick about, er, cars, the game is a story-based racing adventure game, offering – it says here – an "open world environment with more than 50 races". We're anticipating a free-roaming title with races, then. Seeing as the film is about a hotshot race car who finds himself in a hick automobile community, we reckon there'll be a lot of talking to other characters in order to enter races. You also get to choose from over 10 playable characters from the film, all of whom are voiced by the actors who play them, including Owen Wilson and Paul Newman.

As long as it's fast and it handles well, then we reckon this might turn out to be good clean fun. Let's hope so, eh?



△ Nobody likes a showoff. NOBODY.



△ Dear departed Paul Edwards owns a VW Camper. It looks *exactly* like this one. Yipper.

COLD SHOULDER

Despite suffering from the 'not-Pixar' tag, the original animated movie *Ice Age* took £230 million worldwide, which explains why the developers of *The Meltdown* are still being coy about the plot of the next film.



Δ Savage beasts can be soothed with a slap or a stone to the noggin. Imagine David and Goliath, only with David as a nut-hunting rat.



Δ There's a lot of physical comedy.



Δ Beat those smug penguins down.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Play as the nut-obsessed Scrat along with Manny the Mammoth, Sid the Sloth and Diego the Sabre-Toothed Tiger.
- Includes a hoarde of mini-games including matching bats and slipping with a sloth.
- There's the promise of unlocking movie clips and bonus levels with nut collecting.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Sierra Entertainment

What have they done before?
Metal Arms: Glitch In The System (NGC/88 82%)
An inventive robo-shooter that was also slightly unpolished.

ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN

Cream of the ice or is it just a load of snowballs?

Kids love brightly coloured, movie-tied platformers. Like people slipping on banana skins, this is one of those clichés that everyone accepts as fact in spite of the total lack of evidence. No matter what a glance at the games charts might suggest, every developer knows that junior really just wants his games to be generic.

This is one of the reasons why, at first, *Ice Age 2* doesn't inspire. The opening level is packed with handy hits revealing the mystic secrets of double jumps, nut collection and spinning attacks. However, Sierra have added a few fresh elements that should inspire more young minds than Duplo.

A number of mini-games punctuate the tale of Scrat, the nut-hunting rat from the film, and although they aren't revolutionary, each one has a twist. So just when you groan at the prospect of a stealth-powered portion of the adventure, the game turns into a version of 'What's The Time, Mr Sabre Tooth Tiger?'

Okay, so it's unlikely to thaw the hearts of many hardened gamers, but all of these features are at least underpinned by a pretty reliable camera, a solid set of controls and enough footage from the film and vocal performances to give the whole affair a touch of gloss. So while *Ice Age 2: The Meltdown* might not be the hottest thing around, if Sierra can keep finding new ways to incorporate these small innovations, it may yet suit younger players looking for something to chill out with.

> "EVERY DEVELOPER KNOWS THAT JUNIOR REALLY WANTS HIS GAMES TO BE GENERIC"

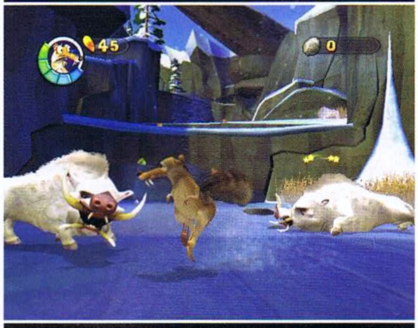




Δ The original cast provide the voices though Scrat is still mostly mute.

NGC VERDICT

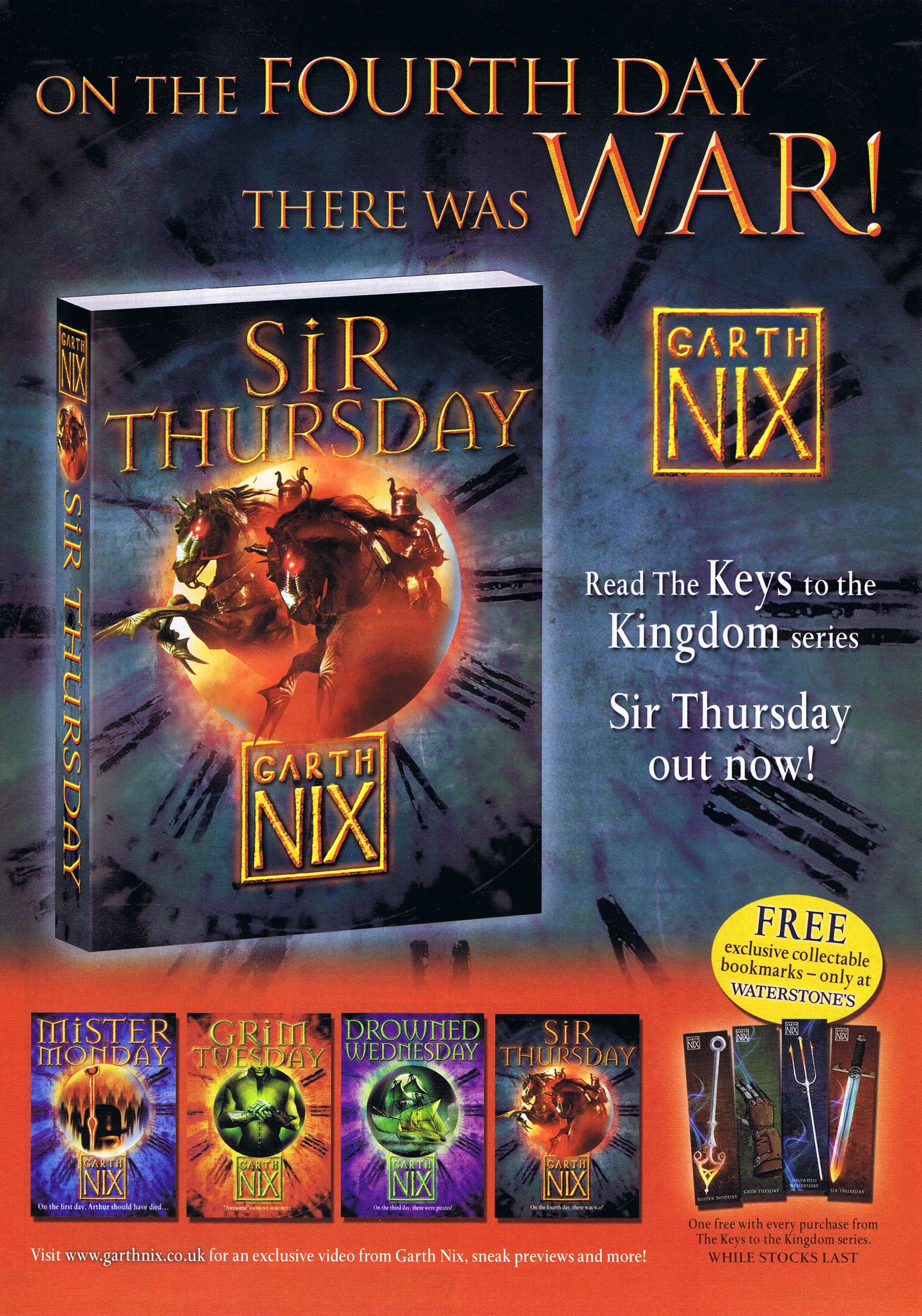
UK 24 MAR | US NOW | JAPAN TBA



While it might have the looks of just another potato-print ported platformer, *Ice Age 2* does actually have enough in the way of novelty and technical ability to become more than just a piggy-backed product. Of course, it's one that won't demand too much either of gamers or of the Gamecube.

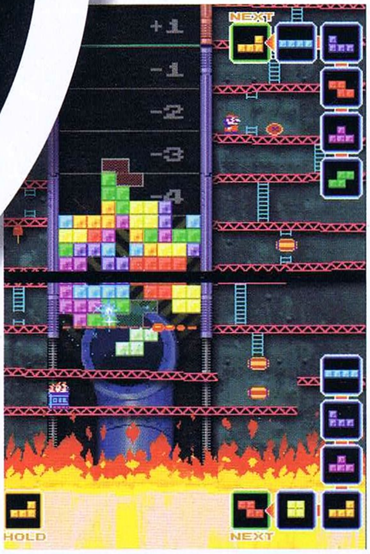
ANTICIPATION RATING

1 **2** 3 4 5



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GARTH NIX
GARTH NIX
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DROWNED WEDNESDAY
GARTH NIX
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SIR THURSDAY
GARTH NIX
On the fourth day, there was war!
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WHILE STOCKS LAST

FIERY FURNACE
Do you know how long it took Alexey Pazhitnov to create *Tetris*? Eh, eh? It took the Russian Academy of Sciences engineer just two weeks to create the game that would spread like wildfire in, erm, a fairly flammable world. Find out more on page 66.



△ Every time you complete two lines in 'Push', it bumps your rival's screen up by one. Mwa-ha-ha-ha...



△ The Standard mode comes in three voracious variants: the endless Marathon, Line Clear and a play against the DS itself.



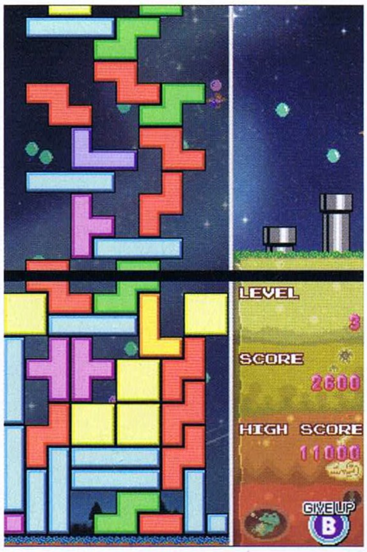


THE KNOWLEDGE

- Six modes of play including the traditional Standard option.
- Two- or four-player Wi-Fi battle mode.
- 10 players can download the game from one DS cart.
- A unique touch screen-powered timer-free game.
- Stat matching to only pair you with equally able gamers online.



△ You can turn off the various extra items when you battle against friends. This is only relevant if you have friends.



△ Any single-squared shards left after a line clears will drop into place in 'Touch' mode. You'll sleep better now, knowing that.



△ We're not sure if it's a good or bad thing, but more of *Mario Bros 3* is played to you as you complete levels.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Nintendo

What have they done before?
Wario Ware Twisted! (NGC/117, 87%)
Twistier than helter-skelter pasta, and more brilliant than the original *Wario Ware*.

TETRIS DS

As crushingly inevitable as getting an L-thingy when what you really needed was a T...

Getting George W and Saddam to share a hog roast, explaining Lost to a toddler on a Sunny D high and improving on the original *Tetris*. Okay, so Nintendo are only undertaking one of these Herculean tasks but it doesn't get trickier than enhancing Alexey Pajitnov's rouble-spinning shape-fitter.

Improvement number one is named 'Touch' and inevitably uses the second screen and stylus to spin and collapse a tower of Tetrominos. This timer-free level also uses proper gravity so that any smaller shapes will fall and plug the remaining gaps.

As one of the three solo-only modes, 'Touch' will also include 50 challenge levels, which should nicely complement the 200 levels of the Puzzle section, in which you choose and place a limited number of blocks against the clock.

Another development, 'Push', is primarily designed to be a battle between you and the CPU or a Wi-Fi foe. With the DS turned on its side and the blocks falling down from the top screen and up from the bottom, any lines cleared from one player's screen are pushed onto the others, forcing them nearer to the red zone and failure.

> **"'PUSH' IS A BATTLE BETWEEN YOU AND A WI-FI FOE, WITH BLOCKS GOING UP AND DOWN"**

Probably strangest of all is the 'Catch' option, in which you control a sticky square, collecting the Tetrominos as they plunge past.

Just to round off this shapely classic, the Standard game shows *Tetris* in its purist-pleasing form, albeit one with the chance for ten players to go head to head with one cart. Well, it's one small step towards world peace.



△ Your aim in 'Touch' mode is to lower the balloons to ground level safely. We don't know why.

NGC VERDICT

UK	US	JAPAN
21 APRIL	20 MARCH	TBA



Not many games appeal equally to the casual and the hardcore gamer, but *Tetris DS* should do exactly that. While the Puzzle levels in particular might prove only a short term distraction, their mixture of gaming simplicity and NES nostalgia in the styling should make the rest more than mere novelty.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**

MOONSHINE
NGC has long had a fondness for the *Harvest Moon* series, all the way back to *Harvest Moon 64* and the little-played but much loved Game Boy Color iteration of the game. We love a bit of farming.

HARVEST MOON: MAGICAL MELODY

Down on the farm, love is in the air. And we're not talking about the cows, people…



We reviewed the Japanese version of this back in issue 107 of **NGC**, where we gave it a brow-moisteningly rustic 85%. So why are we doing a small but perfectly formed half-page news story on it? Because plucky publishers Rising Star are set to please the farmer in all of us by bringing *Harvest Moon: Magical Melody* to the shores of this sceptred isle in the very month of… Spring! Hurrah! Which is a lovely surprise, given what we said in the review: "if you're a fan of the series, don't hold your breath waiting for the UK version. You'll die." Feel free to commence breath-holding immediately.

So, to refresh your memory, this is the latest in a long line of venerable farming sims, but *Harvest Moon* is approximately one million times more exciting than that sounds. It's cute, full of charm, and while the game is a lot of hard work in the earlier stages, all that soil-tilling and plant watering pays off handsomely in the long run, and the result is a peculiarly engrossing game. And, as always, you can date a lovely local lass and, if you play your manure-encrusted hand right, get married. Oo-arr.

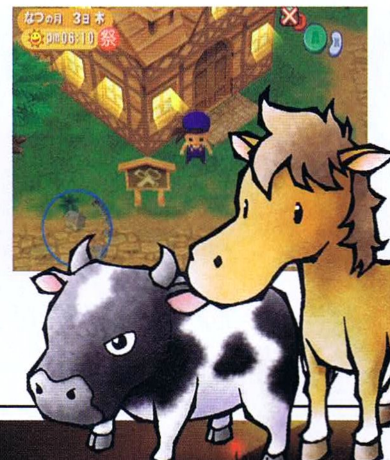
Basically, it's great. We're still hanging on a definite release date, but expect a PAL review very soon.



△ **Feed the pigs, muck out the stables, show Daisy a good time. It's all here.**



△ **Fishing – one of the great videogame pastimes, just behind shooting aliens.**



X-MEN 3

The highly-anticipated third sequel to *W-Men*

While the film has got X-fans up in arms due to a rushed production schedule, Brett 'Red Dragon' Ratner and the many moods of Vinnie Jones trussed up in a rubber muscle-suit, the game should send them into paroxysms of mutant, spandex-clad delight. With three playable characters – saucy jack Nightcrawler, angry hair-man Wolverine and the Walls Magnum of superheroes, Iceman – this sets up the story for the film and explains why Nightcrawler isn't in it (we're guessing it won't be a video of Alan Cumming saying "I couldn't be arsed, duck").

These new screenshots show that the game is looking incredible (unless they're lying, and we hope they're not) and we particularly like the shot of Iceman fighting an enormous fire serpent, presumably created by moody firestarting teenage strop-fop Pyro. We've not played the game yet, however, but if the three characters offer suitably disparate play styles (teleport-tastic stealth for Nightcrawler, murderous enemy-perforation with Wolvie, and slippy-slidey skatin' fun for Iceman) then this could well be something that makes us – wait for it – X-static. Arf! (*fired* – **Ed**)



△ **Fingers crossed, this'll be ace.**









LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

At last, a Star Wars sequel that won't disappoint… unless, of course, you prefer Jar Jar Binks to Ewoks. You don't, do you?



∆ They've even got the right haircuts! It's all in the details, people. Great stuff.



∆ How much fun does this look like being? More fun than *you've ever had before.*



∆ Martin says he finds the Lego Princess Leia "oddly alluring". This is… interesting.



∆ Luke against the Emperor. And look! He draws his clothes on his body! Bless.

The original *Lego Star Wars* was a real treat; a kid's game that could be enjoyed by adults, full of charm and big, brick-based fun. This sequel goes back and gives us what we all wanted – a game based on the original trilogy, rather than the patchy sequels (or, er, prequels, to be accurate. It's still so confusing).

The game follows the same format as before – pleasing fighting and jumping with a vast cast of characters, each of whom has their own particular ability – but throws in the *Star Wars* equivalent of the kitchen sink and possibly the rest of the kitchen as well, even down to the Kenwood Magimix (made out of Lego and waving a lightsaber, natch). Now you can look forward to riding a huge variety of vehicles and monsters, more than 50 new characters, new special attacks and best of all, the ability to mix and match body parts from different characters, so you can make your own Frankensteinian Greedo/Chewbacca hybrid, who we'd dub Greebacca, or possibly Chewdo. And for those who found the first *Lego Star Wars* a little on the easy side, there's an 'advanced mode', which presumably ups the challenge ante, although we're not quite sure how as yet.

It's all looking great, then, and there's even talk of the ability to unlock 56 extra characters by plugging in a memory card with a save from the first game, although LucasArts have said this facility will only be available on certain platforms. We're hoping, of course, that this will include the Gamecube version. There's also a DS version where, sensibly, this option won't make an appearance, although you'll be able to have four-player wireless co-op play, which kind of makes up for it. In a word: exciting. Sadly, we have to wait until some time in the Autumn for it. Bah.

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS



A plum new outing for our plummiest plumber playmate, pleasingly presented for your pleasure



∆ The characters are 3D, but the game plays in 2D. Do you see?



∆ What kind of *Mario* game would this be without a giant-lipped fish?

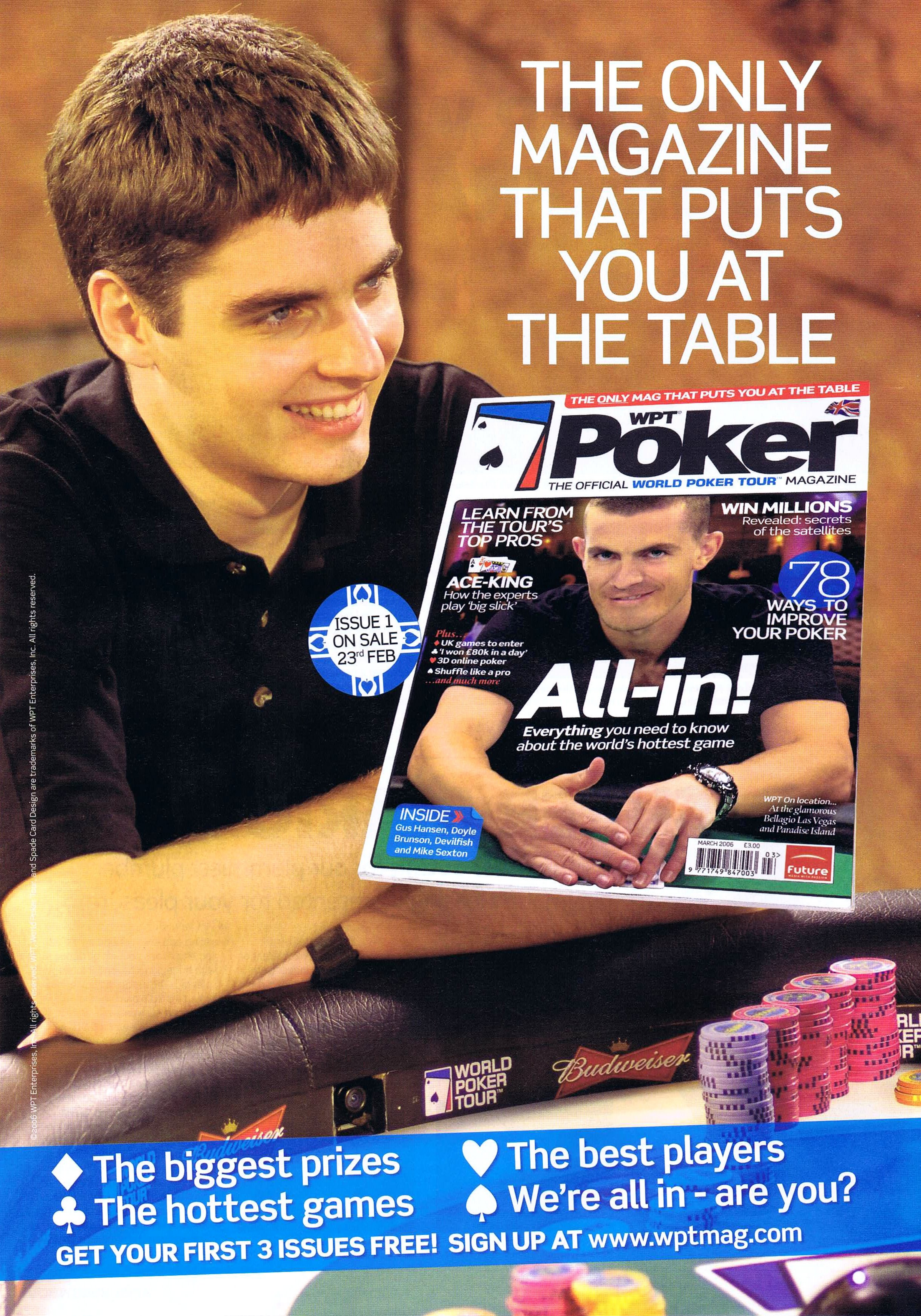


∆ Piranha Plants, Warp Pipes, coins… everything's here. Capital!

Nintendo are being either very confident or jolly rash indeed with this, the first 2D, side-scrolling *Mario* in approximately seven millennia, as they're touting it as the best 2D *Mario ever*. That's quite the claim; but you know what? They might just be right.

Of course, it's terribly familiar, offering all the running, jumping, sliding and enemy-bopping we've come to expect, but it's all done with huge panache, and it looks splendid. The action may take place on a 2D plane, but the 3D graphics are a treat, and fancy new physics make the world much more interactive than it has been in a 2D *Mario* before.

The only fluff on the Murray Mint, as it were, is the fact that this doesn't take spectacular advantage of the DS. Yep, the action moves to the touch screen when you're underground, and the touch screen can be used to select items, but the unique capabilities of Ninty's handheld seem disappointingly under-used. Nevertheless, it's the gameplay that counts, and on current evidence that gameplay is creamier than the creamiest cream pie you ever did see. Mmm.


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OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE! REVIEWS



SONIC RIDERS

Faster than a speeding bullet, it's a hedgehog in his natural habitat – *riding a hoverboard*? This ain't no *Back to the Future* à la hedgehog, Sega. Can you handle the pace? **P24**

ANIMAL CROSSING WILD WORLD

It's pure magic, even if the frisky little furballs are a bit on the freaky side… **P34**







PLUS!



OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured this game is absolute crud.

25-49
A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
Some great bits, some not-so great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

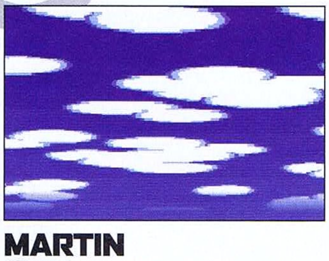
75-89
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.

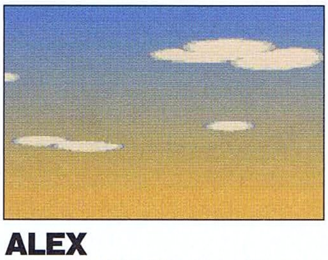
NGC STAR GAME

MEET THE NGC TEAM

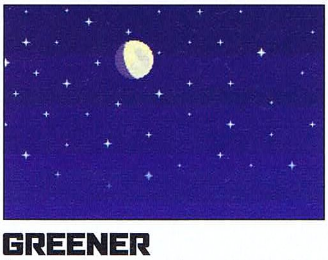
When you look up at the sky in Animal Crossing, what do *you* see?



MARTIN
"Clear skies overhead, and not a bother in the world. Stress is for other people, no really. I love everyone. I love you."



ALEX
"A-ha, at dusk the time for dancing is nigh. Hee hee, come, little ones. Let us take our fishing poles into the woods."



GREENER
"Star! Star! Look, there's another one! There, and there! Oh, it's all so beautiful. I'm definitely going to cry this time."



JES
"With the dawning of each new day, my evil machinations inch me closer to world domination. And also breakfast."

"Expect to do a lot of bumping into walls"

The ride of your life or about as much fun as a hedgehog on a skateboard?

SONIC RIDERS™



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SEGA
DEVELOPER	SEGA
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

RING-A-DING-DING

Naturally, there are rings to collect. Getting 30 of them whacks up the top level of your air meter, allowing you to accrue more air via stuntage. Elusive '100 Ring' boxes are hidden in each course too, which are very useful.



MAIN MAN

There are piles of characters to choose from, and also boards too. Whichever you choose, though, expect to do a lot of bumping into walls and falling off tracks. (Interestingly, Shadow ice-skates instead of riding a board. How contrary).



STUNT MASTER

You need to use ramps to jump off – hold A to charge a jump – in order to enact stunts. Annoyingly, however, you can't do stunts off every ramp in the game, which is odd. But still, we've only found a few that are grumpy like this.





FUN OF THE AIR

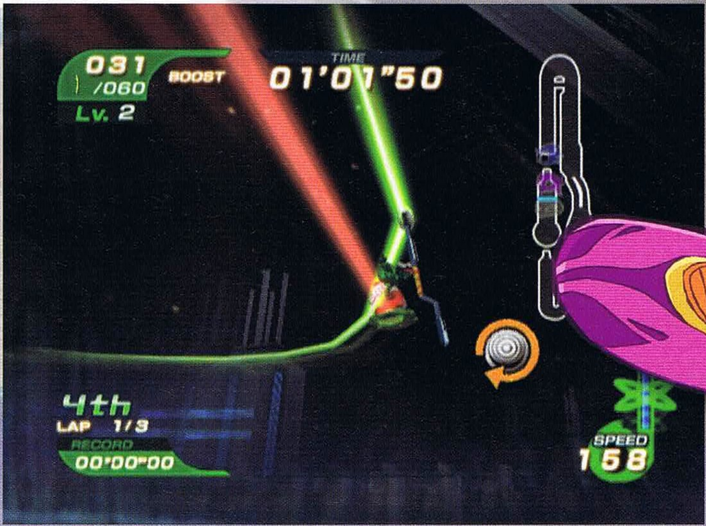
This here's the air meter, which fills up when you pull stunts. It's used to keep you on your board, and to boost – use it up, and you'll be forced to hop off your board and run. Slowly. So it's best to keep it topped up, eh?



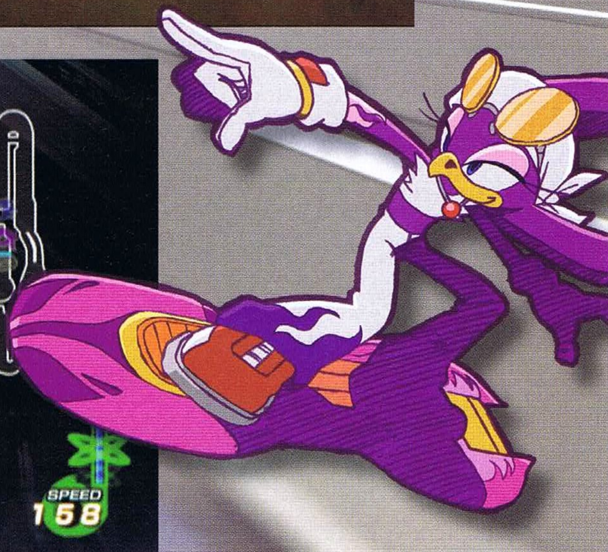
△ Green bird-thing gets 'rad'. Man.



△ This takes lots of hard practice.



△ These on-rails type bits give you a chance to recover air by twiddling your stick.



"A kaleidoscopic whirlwind of motion"

HIGHWAY TO…

Welcome to Babylon Garden, which contains all that's great and awful about Sonic Riders. It's super-quick, with multiple routes and opportunities for slipstreaming in opponents' air wakes, but it's also got hellish borderless corners.





△ You're graded for every stunt that you do, with your landing being particularly important.



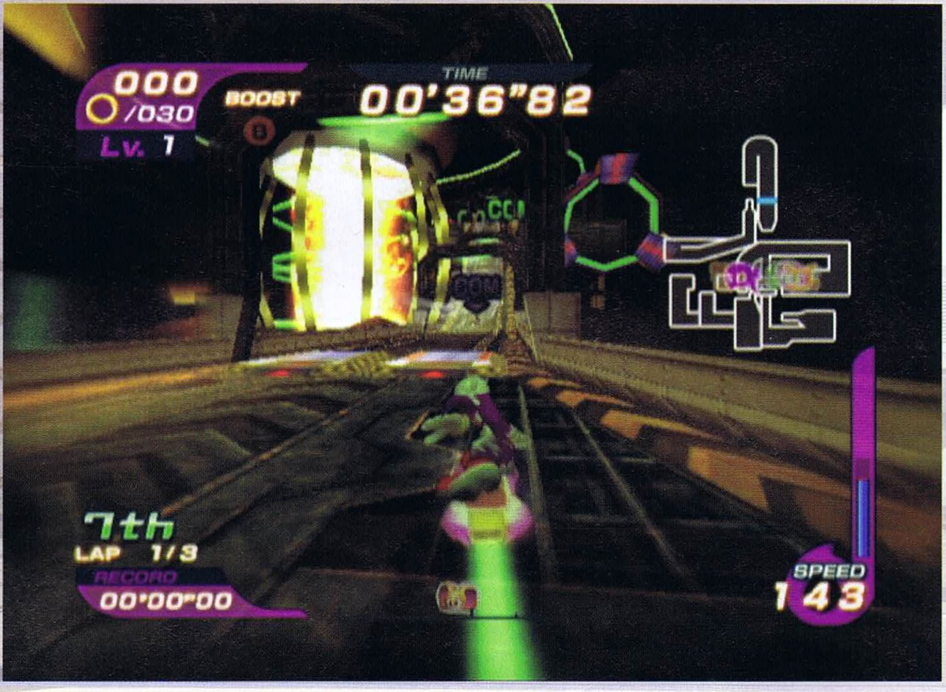
△ Get close to an enemy while boosting and you can nobble them with a close combat attack.



△ In about one hundredth of a nanosecond, Knuckles here is going to go sailing into the wild blue yonder.







△ Seventh! Be prepared to see yourself low in the rankings for quite a while. It's that type of game.



First things first, then. *Sonic Riders* is fast. *F-zero* fast. Fast enough to make you almost believe that the wind really is whipping through your hair and that G-forces are flapping your cheeks all over the shop. If you thought the other *Sonic* games were fast, you're in for a nice surprise, as this is even faster (unless, of course, you're speed-phobic). It can be a genuinely thrilling experience; an elemental force that leaves you breathless and shaking, a kaleidoscopic whirlwind of motion that is, perhaps, a properly logical extension of Sonic's particular talent. Even if that means he has to ride a hoverboard, which is perhaps a little odd for the fastest hedgehog alive (surely it's his legs that make him fast, not some hitherto unknown talent for boarding? Perhaps it's best not to think about it too much).

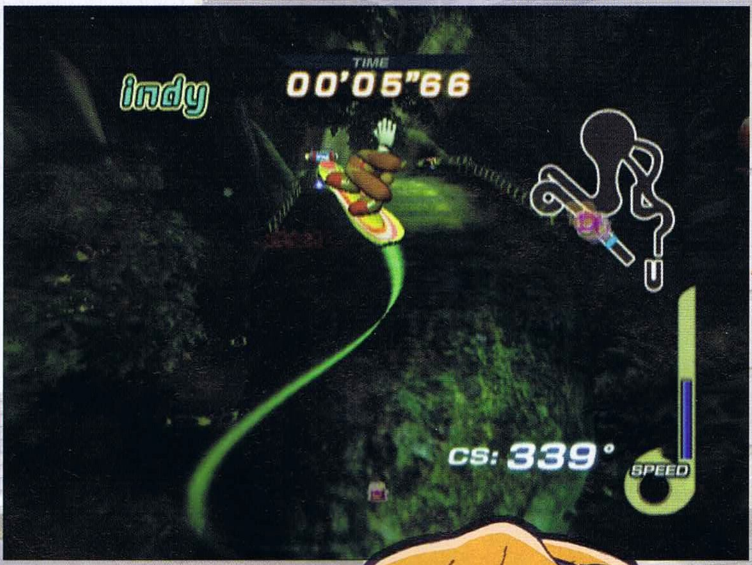
"SURELY IT'S HIS LEGS THAT MAKE HIM FAST, NOT A TALENT FOR BOARDING?"

So, anyway. Jettisoning the RPG-ish action of the *Sonic Adventure* games, *Sonic Riders* is straight racing. There's no exploration and none of the distractions that have marred most of Sonic's 3D games. It's basic, first-one-to-the-finish-line-wins action, and this simplicity and focus makes the game more successful, in some ways, than 2004's *Sonic Heroes*. Of course, the reason Sonic and his chums are riding hoverboards is that it enables them to do stunts in an *SSX/1080*-lite manner, and it also



FAST FUN

If you're fed up of Mario Kart, *then* Sonic Riders *offers four-way racing fun over a variety of modes. Obviously there's straight racing, but there's also a tag mode and a battle mode. Sadly, we found this last option to be about as much fun as pulling dirty teeth from a putrefied corpse, but at least it all runs smoothly and quickly when four players are involved.*



△ It's all gone a bit *F-Zero* here.





△ If you can catch someone's wake on a corner, you don't need to worry about cornering.

allows Sega to shoehorn in a new mechanic – the air meter.

A little bar on the right hand side of the screen shows how much 'air' you've accrued, and it's constantly falling as this is obviously what keeps your board – or 'gear', as it's called here – suspended. So, as well as racing as fast as you can, you've also got to keep your air meter topped up, and this can be done by pulling stunts or stopping at handy air-refreshing pit-stops. Stunts are dead simple – Sega wanted to make *Sonic Riders* as accessible as possible, so as long as you've charged your jump (by holding A) to get enough height when you spring off a ramp, moving the joystick is all you need to do to perform a number of board-based stunts. The air meter is also used to boost (via B), which is absolutely necessary if you want to be in spitting distance of winning but, naturally, this saps your air reserves significantly.

It's a system that works, and it certainly adds a little depth to proceedings. Which is a good thing because, as is so often the case with the 3D *Sonic* games, *Sonic Riders* leaves you with the nagging feeling that you don't really have too much control over what you're doing. Acceleration is automatic, as in *Kirby's Air Ride*, and there's a cornering system that slows you down, by holding R, and then gives you a boost when you release it. As the game isn't on rails – though it often feels like it is – this system also powerslides you around corners, letting you take bends in a tighter fashion than the restrictive steering would otherwise allow. On-screen prompts tell you when to use this cornering technique, and if you don't use it at exactly these moments, you'll generally career off the track if there's no border. It's hugely frustrating, especially because the Gamecube's cruel digital

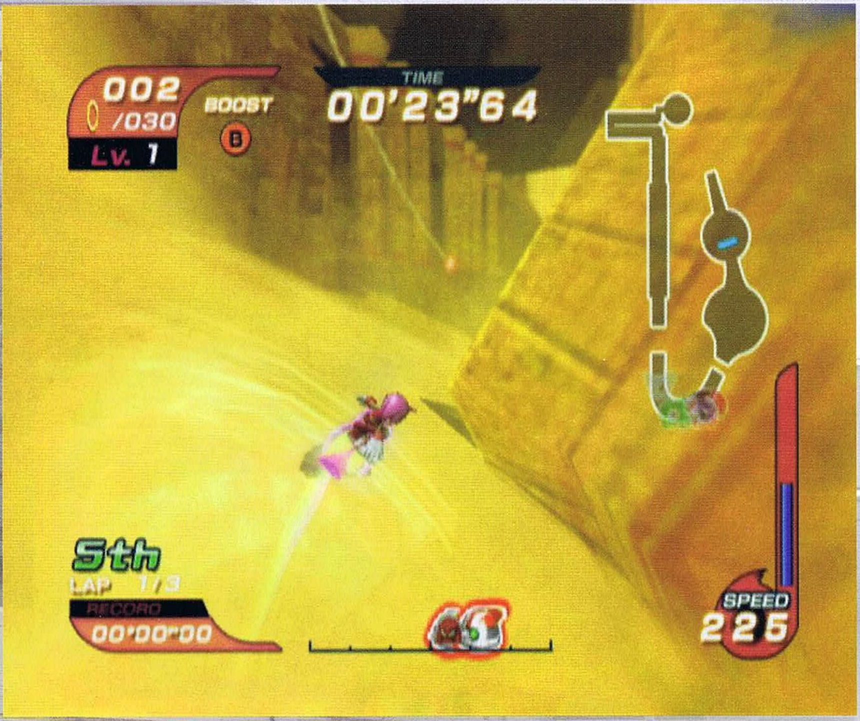


HOP TO IT

There's a 'secret turbo start' but it's highly unusual. A green line will head towards the start line during the countdown, and if you can time it right, you'll get a boost start. Muck it up and you'll get electrocuted, which isn't very nice.

TRACKS OF MY TEARS

A selection of tracks that offer tears of both joy and pain…



△ Sand Ruins has a horrendous slice of track where it's all too easy to fall off the side and then get placed back exactly where you went off. Otherwise, it's a decent course.



△ With an 'interesting' sideline in right-angled corners, Egg Factory is tight and claustrophobic.



△ Splash Canyon is probably our favourite track – it's varied, quick and not as horribly unfair as some.



△ You've got to admit, it certainly looks nice.



△ Ah yes, the centipede. I mean… what the *frick*?



brain always sticks you back on the track at a point calculated for maximum annoyance – usually at the apex of a bend where there's no way to save yourself from another plummet. It's only with much perseverance and self restraint (the times we wanted to throw the Wavebird across the room were legion) that this system can be in any fashion mastered. And even then it'll betray you when you least need it to.

And the thing is, you absolutely need this function if you're going to succeed. Unlike, say, *Mario Kart DS*, where you can pootle along with a reasonable amount of success without resorting to the powerslide, the regular steering in *Sonic Riders* is inconsequential enough as to be cardiac arrest-causingly useless. Simply swerving across the track to get coins is inaccurate and doesn't turn as much as you need – and seeing as the powerslide move is designed for use on big, swerving bends, it's almost useless on straights. The result is a lot of banging against walls and mounting frustration as you realise you can never be as exact as you want or need to be.

All of this is a terrible shame as, otherwise, *Sonic Riders* is chock



BAD BOYS

Story mode was seen off in an afternoon – if you don't count the 20-odd goes it took to complete the Babylon Garden track – which isn't long. But, finishing it opens a Story mode from the bad guys' side, and a sprawling Mission mode. There's plenty here.

SONIC RIDERS

Is it a bird, a plane – no. Just another hedgehog



△ We like this bit. It's ace.



△ Around about here you want to be holding down A to get a big fat jump.



△ The ladies love cool Sonic. That would make him LL Cool S. If he was a rapper.



△ Whoosh! And up the super-magic racing beanstalk he goes. He's very… blue.

full to the brim of imagination, invention and the desire to please. The tracks – aside from those hateful borderless areas that the control system really can't deal with – are packed full of interesting details and ideas. On a first run through, in fact, there's so much to take in that it's a little like having seven varieties of paint squirted in your eyes as you're pushed off the side of a building. The different elements, such as room-to-breathe areas, where you're given a ride by a spaceship or giant centipede (and you can idly twirl the joystick to regain some much-needed air), multiple routes and a hundred different impressive sights (breaking through the top of a forest canopy, being fired over an acropolis wall by a giant crossbow…) all conspire to knock your socks off. Even the problematic controls are momentarily forgotten when you realise you can ride in the air wake of opponent riders, which lets you follow their course without having to worry about falling off the edge of the track, and allows you to pull nifty stunts by riding up the edge of the wake.

It's a big game, too, with mission modes, battle games, squillions of unlockable characters and gears, and four-player support that rips along at a pleasing pace. But no matter how generous *Sonic Riders* is, and how occasionally, breathtakingly thrilling it can be, there are simply too many problems and frustrations present to allow the game to be the 3D *Sonic* we've all been waiting for.

MARTIN KITTS

"THE RESULT IS A LOT OF FRUSTRATION AND BANGING AGAINST WALLS"



ANIMAL MAGIC

All the characters in the game are grouped into one of three categories – Power, Speed or Fly – which dictates whether they can bash through obstacles, super-fast, or get huge 'air' off ramps and wake trails. Natty.

+

- Really, really fast.
- Looks lovely.
- Super inventive.

–

- Annoying controls.
- Simultaneously too confusing and too simple.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Mario Kart DS
Nintendo
NGC/91 65%
Team-based Sonic that's not entirely successful.



8 VISUALS
Riot of colour and detail. Great fun to watch.

6 SOUNDS
The announcer makes us want to stick pencils in our ears.

7 MASTERY
Whips along nicely with naer' a pause for breath.

8 LIFESPAN
There's loads to do, if you don't get bored.

VERDICT

Fast, furious and frustrating, this *Sonic* is full of spectacle but sadly lacking in subtlety.

NGC 75

"A refreshing move back to basics"





△ The scenery is fully destructible.





△ Get right next to a rival worm and you can dragon punch him into next week. Or into tomorrow, at the very least.

WORMS OPEN WARFARE

War was never so cute, or so thoroughly familiar...

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	TEAM 17
RELEASE DATE	MARCH
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
WI-FI	YES
MIC	NO
COST	£30



If you're one of the two people that's never played *Worms* before, *Open Warfare* will probably come as a very pleasant surprise indeed. If you're one of the many trillions that grew up with the game and have seen it evolve into 3D and grow cluttered with novelty, then it will either be a refreshing move back to basics or seem thoroughly old hat, and contemptible through familiarity.

We're seeing it as a refreshing move back to basics. Yep, it's true that we've played *Worms* to death over the years, but age seemingly shall not wither the beautiful simplicity and peculiarly British silliness of its concept.

So essentially, yes, this is *Worms*, but on the DS. The premise is the same as it's always been – wage war across a destructible landscape with a team of worms, utilising a vast array of weapons and equipment, from humble bazookas and shotguns to, yes, sheep, jetpacks and holy hand grenades. The game's turn-based, and you've only got a set amount of time in which to move and fire. Power-ups drop from the sky, giving you life-saving health and other, more offensive items.

No changes there, then. But despite this, *Worms: Open Warfare* is still great fun, which just goes to show how well-designed the basic concept of the game is. And as far as DS-specific changes are concerned, the news is mixed. The additions are tiny but well-judged, and this certainly isn't a brave new way of playing videogames in the way that, say, *Nintendogs* is. The playing area is presented on the top screen, and the touch screen contains timers (for both game length and turn length), weapons menus (so you can equip your worms with a tap of the stylus or fingernail), wind direction and, best of all, a mini-map that, by drawing the stylus across it, lets you scout over the entire playing area on the top screen.

And, aside from four-player wireless multiplayer, that's your lot as far as taking advantage of the DS is concerned. But all of these small tweaks make playing the game better than it would otherwise be on something like, say, the GBA, and it's hard to see what else Team 17 could have



ANNOYING

It should be noted that some elements of the game do frustrate us. Movement is slow, and jumping, in particular, is extremely annoying. If you jump to close to the side of a wall, for example, you'll just bounce straight back. It's inexact and irritating. But those worms are just so cute...

WORMS: OPEN WARFARE

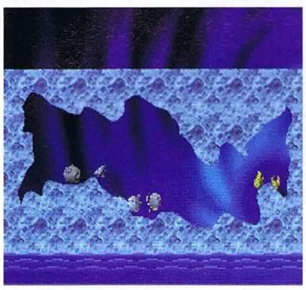
Worm war for scousers



△ You'll need to use equipment like the jetpack to escape some areas.



△ If you can blow up a barrel to take a worm out, you'll be laughing.



△ The ability to scroll around the map with the touch screen is ace.



△ It may not be the most visually advanced game, but it's fun.



WORM TEST

A little like the Mission Mode in Mario Kart DS, Worms: Open Warfare *contains a Challenge mode to while away train journeys with. The first few levels are tutorials for newcomers to the* Worms *experience, but it then goes on to progressively harder missions, with severe time limits and so on. It's not as varied as* Mario Kart's *Mission Mode, but it's nice to have, nonetheless.*



done to use the DS more without it seeming gimmicky.

It's great see *Worms* return in its original format and, as a both a slice of gaming history and portable entertainment, *Open Warfare* is to be welcomed. Nonetheless, *Worms* veterans run the risk of seeing little more than nostalgia here. Being the enthusiastic gaming omnivores that we are, though, we're pleased to see the game, and the bottom line is that it's still a lot of fun. It's not going to offer you the strategic wonder of *Advance Wars*, but with its refreshing silliness (we like the scouse worms best) and turn-based carnage, it remains an oddball tactical treat, and a reminder that, in these days of incredible technical advances, sometimes good game design is all you need.

JES BICKHAM

> **"AGE SHALL NOT WITHER THE BEAUTIFUL SIMPLICITY AND SILLINESS OF THE CONCEPT"**



△ It's never going to drag you away from the brain-filling goodness of *Advance Wars DS*, but it's 'neato' nonetheless.

+

- It's *Worms*!
- Multiplayer.
- OK touch screen support.

−

- It's an old, old game.
- Not much new for *Worms* vets.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Advance Wars: Dual Strike
Nintendo
NGC/110 5/5
Not especially silly, but an astonishingly good turn-based strategy game.



5 VISUALS
Average all over – but visuals aren't what *Worms* is about.

6 SOUNDS
Jaunty little tunes and some cutesy voice samples.

5 MASTERY
Couldn't exactly be described as pushing the hardware. At all.

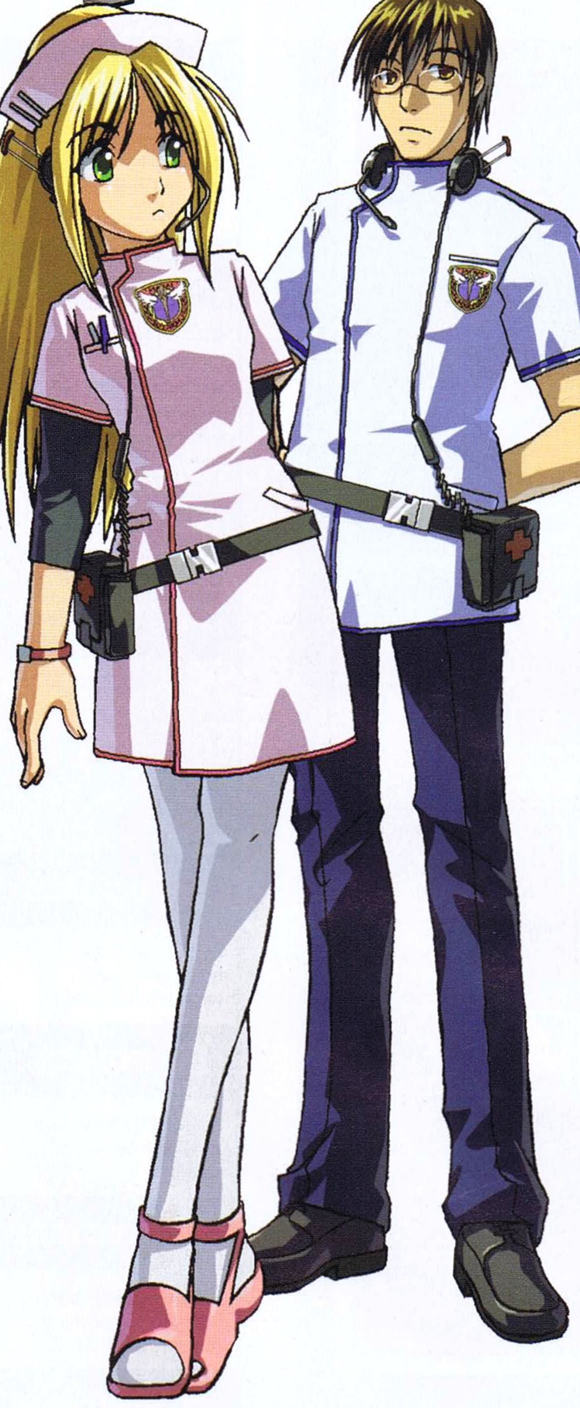
8 LIFESPAN
The simple joy of *Worms* is a lasting one. And there's multiplayer too.

VERDICT

One the one hand, this is old and tired. On the other, it's simple, addictive fun, and that's what matters.

NGC 76

"Weeping wounds and massive internal haemorrhaging"





△ Yes, it's a star. *Really.*





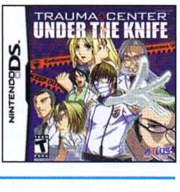
△ Ah, the wonderful Angie Thompson. Nurse, love interest, and the only character deemed worthy of using both screens.

TRAUMA CENTER

The game that puts the err into ER...

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	ATLUS
RELEASE DATE	28 APR
PLAYERS	1
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
WI-FI	NO
MIC	NO
COST	£30



Five points linked by one line. To most nimble fingered people it would be nothing more than a swish of the stylus, but for us it was the moment that our initial adoration of *Trauma Center* turned into steamed loathing. And the reason for this venting of theatre-rage? Our total inability to draw a bloody star.

Such pathetic pentagram-based penmanship can only be attributed to pressure and *Trauma Center* piles it on relentlessly. While the 30 operations are mostly routine, everything in this ER has to be performed without hesitation: the clock is ticking, a vein is throbbing, a heart is pounding and the only pressure that is falling belongs to the ailing patient.

But it isn't just the constant spurts of claret, weeping wounds and massive internal haemorrhaging that keep you cutting, it's also the soapy lathering of your fellow quacks, the thought of your patient dying skewered on the operating table and the scene of utter solitude and failure shown by the 'Game Over' screen.

Trauma Center is a joyfully inventive but vastly frustrating game. For example, initially a nurse holds your surgical gloves, explaining how to open wounds, drain pus and stitch without leaving a scar, but after that, trial and error become an integral part of each operation. Complex procedures have to be guessed at or dredged up from memory, and in surgery the last thing you want to do is make a wild stab in the dark. Take a week's break between games and your survival ratio will make Harold Shipman seem like George Clooney on a particularly successful day.

To compound these small problems, the game is also infected with some nasty design flaws, one of them being that there's no replay option to scrub up again after any screw ups. Instead you chat, you cut and you repeat the routine part of the surgery. We also found that the top of the screen was lacking in sensitivity: bandages would be deemed to miss when placed right on the wound and, just to magnify these problems, zooming in and out sometimes didn't work.

But, the chief culprit is the unpredictable difficulty level. Simple



10cc OF STORY

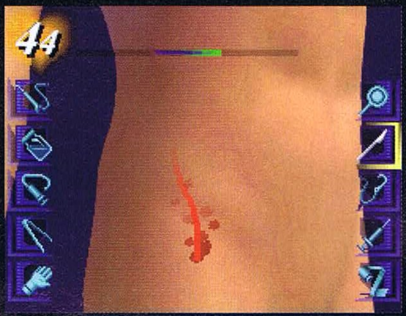
With a style that reminds most people of Fist Of The North Star and a plot that hints at Holby City combined with 24, all played out to a theme tune that might fit Young Doctors, Trauma Center has an odd but fitting atmosphere. Don't worry: bash Select to skip the chat without missing out.

NURSE, THE SCREENS!

You may think that medical training demands years of hard work, years without sleep and years of playing golf, but with this handy guide you'll be looking at medical pictures for fun not work.



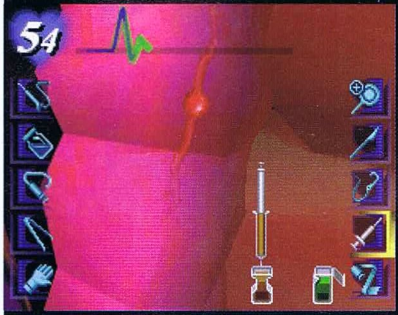
■ GEL TOGETHER Every operation starts and ends with gel. Used for cleaning wounds and scratches, it can also be used as an alternative to peanut butter.



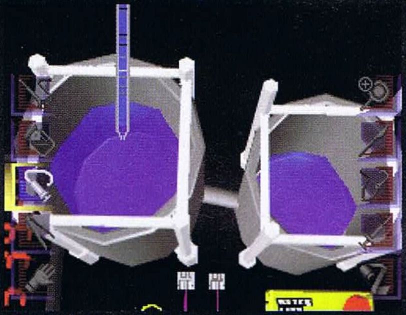
■ SLAP-DASH Don't worry too much about keeping a steady hand. When it comes to the scapel you can be as slap-dash as you like, almost without negative effect.



■ WRONG TURN These forceps are for lifting and grabbing. You're punished for pinching an opening from the wrong side, without being able to know which side *is* right.



■ DON'T JUST SAY NO Administering drugs is vital work for keeping patients stable and filling organs with anti-inflammatory agents.



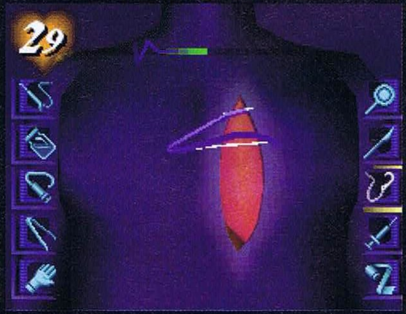
■ BODILY FLUIDS Your working area will get clogged with blood, pus or other bodily fluids. Drain them away with this tube. Here we see the drain used to defuse a bomb.



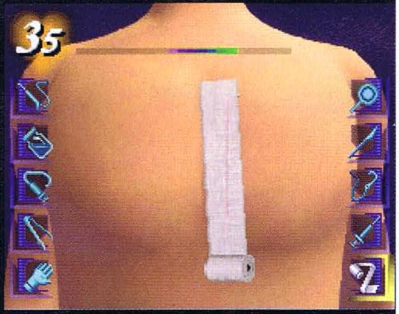
■ ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM Encircle something to magnify it; to zoom out you produce a small circle. It should be easy, though the game can demand Da Vinci-level precision.



■ ATTACK! Burning rogue cells off the larynx seems high-tech initially; later you'll try to destroy a strain of superbug with blasts from your laser.



■ THE END To close a wound, apply a liberal coating of gel and sew up with a quick zigzag of stitches. It might look tricky but even with a hangover, it hardly challenges.



■ ALL WRAPPED UP Applying the bandages can be the most fiddly bit. Often the game will seem to fail you for getting the fabric perfectly positioned.

hack and sew jobs are punctuated by epic aneurysm removals and even mid-air operations where turbulence jogs your cutting arm. These aren't balanced tests of skill; they're near show stoppers which will either drive you to toss the cart into oblivion or force you to stay up all night with sweat beading on your forehead.

But, unbelievably, you *will* keep playing. Despite the methodical mastery and total concentration demanded, *Trauma Center* will keep you hunched over and hooked long after your stop has sailed past, long after your lover has left, long after the Sqalthain hordes have enslaved the entire human race. Then, when you've finally finished every single operation, you'll put it down, never to pick it up ever again.

ALEX COOKE

> **"SIMPLE HACK AND SEW JOBS ARE PUNCTUATED BY EPIC ANEURYSM REMOVALS"**



△ **Our hero, Dr Stiles, is a muttering mod-wannabe who loves a spot of soul searching. Not to mention a lot of gulping.**

+

■ Wonderfully original in concept.
■ Curiously addictive and compelling.

–

■ Demands more patience than an NHS queue.
■ Repetitive levels.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney
Capcom
NGC/118 82%
The characters are more compelling and it's more fun.



7 VISUALS

Stylistically strong, if largely static, screens showing 3D organs.

6 SOUNDS

Soap opera music works but the speech lacks emotion.

7 MASTERY

A few dead spots on screen don't quite spoil the experience.

6 LIFESPAN

It's a bumpy journey to the end and, if you make it, there's little else.

VERDICT

Original, clever, cute, frustrating, too bloody hard and slavishly linear. Love and hate wrapped up in one antiseptic pack.

NGC 77

"Work your dewlaps off for Tom Nook"





Typing is a cinch now, thanks to the wonder of the stylus.



See! The most disturbing living room ever furnished.



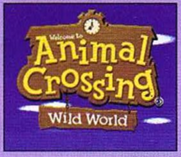
NGC STAR GAME

ANIMAL CROSSING WILD WORLD

Animal magic! Now friends can visit your disturbing community of beast-headed men, thanks to the wonders of online play…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
RELEASE DATE	MARCH
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	YES
WI-FI	YES
MIC	NO
COST	£30



Playing *Animal Crossing* is like living life through a lens. A surreal, terrifying lens, mind, one that turns your neighbours into beast-headed people that would give us a severe case of the willies (and possibly an actual savaging) in real life. If you've never had the pleasure of playing it before, know this: there's no real goal, no bosses, no dungeons to conquer. It's all about living a virtual life and enjoying a community: talking to the residents, furnishing your house, running errands, attending events, and paying off your mortgage. This latter point might not sound like much fun, but it curiously is, even when the person you're giving your hard-earned cash to is a monstrous man-racoon slavedriver who takes great delight in literally owning you until you've paid off your debt.

But you probably know all this, if you ever encountered the game on Gamecube. *Wild World* is to all intents and purposes the same game on the DS, with a smattering of minor differences and a fabulous multiplayer mode, something the GC version sorely lacked (despite friends being able to visit your village while you weren't there). As such, and despite these new bits, the game is hugely familiar. And yet, such is the charm of *Animal Crossing* that we can't begrudge it it's sameyness. Once you've worked your way through the few things you have to do at the start of the game – work your dewlaps off for Tom Nook, introduce yourself to the other villagers, and so on – the wonder of being able to

> "THE ILLUSION THAT LIFE IS BEING LIVED WHILE YOUR DS IS OFF PERSISTS"



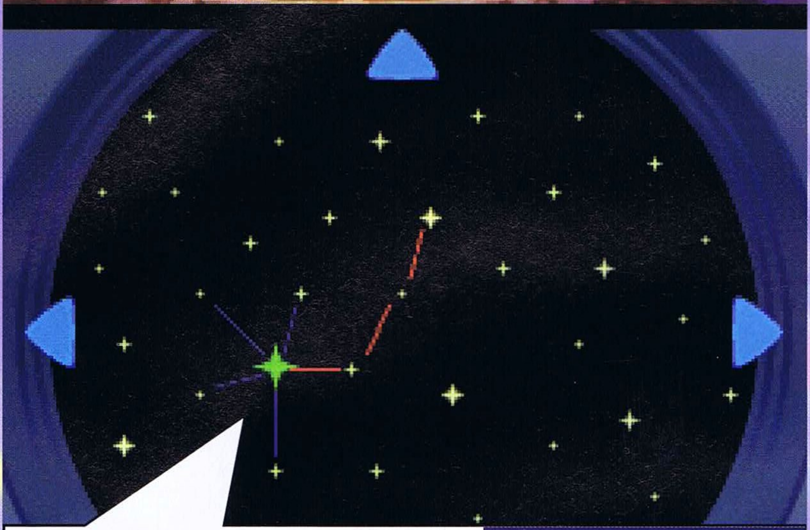
FORMAT FUN

The dual screens of the DS aren't used particularly well in *Animal Crossing*, but the stylus and touch screen certainly make typing and using your items a lot easier – especially when communicating with others playing online.

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

The Island of Dr. Moreau, but cuter







STAR STRUCK

One of our favourite new bits in Animal Crossing: Wild World *is the ability to draw your own constellations and name your own stars, which is especially pleasing when day turns to night, and when other people (real life people, not terrifying virtual computer-controller Island of Dr. Moreau-style animal-headed freaks) visit your town.* Animal Crossing*: it's the game that lives to give.*

ONLINE ANIMALS

Getting a friend to visit your town is simplicity itself!



You'll need to talk to Boomer and Copper at the Gatehouse.



They'll give you the option of online or wireless play.



And hey presto! Your friends can visit you. Nice, eh? Yes.

do your own thing and live virtual life at a pace that suits you once again exerts an incredible pull.

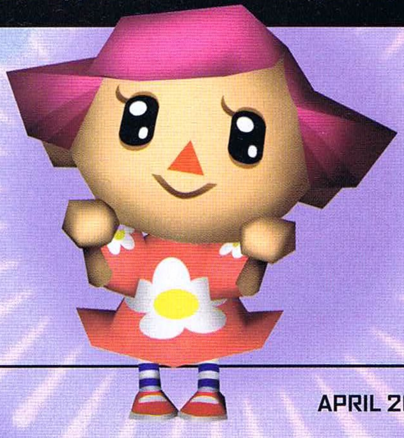
It's amazing that a game asking you to indulge in all sorts of menial tasks – housecleaning, for example – can engage like this, but it's precisely the lack of obvious, traditional videogame goals that makes the game such a pleasure. If you are completely new to the experience of *Animal Crossing*, be assured that it is a game that cuts across boundaries, in much the same way as, say, *Nintendogs* does. It's cutesy, and colourful, but it's wittily-written, engrossing, and offers constant surprises in the form of new events on the calendar. The illusion that life is being lived while your DS is turned off persists, and persists brilliantly.

But the rest of you are probably wondering about whether this is a purchase that should be made, given its similarity to the Gamecube *Animal Crossing*. Yes, we cry with the bulletproof confidence of the righteous, it is. Our import review in issue 115 already pointed out the new additions to the game, of which there are many, including some graphical tweaks – we particularly like the way your village scrolls from the horizon, as if you're living on your own tiny planetoid. But, it is definitely the addition of an online multiplayer mode that demands you experience



NO NES

One big drawback with the game is that, unlike the Gamecube version, there are no NES games to collect and play. Boo! Hiss! <Insert other traditional pantomime noise here>! The online mode more than makes up for this ommission, though.



A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Things to see, things to do – it's a wonderful place

FILL YOUR DIARY

The element of *Animal Crossing* that offers the most surprises in the long term, and that will no doubt keep you coming back, is the sheer number of special events that crop up on your calendar. As you can see below, New Year is full of fireworks and joy, but there are loads more. Always check to see what's coming up – if you don't play for a while, who knows what you might miss?



SEASONAL CYCLE

As before, life in *Animal Crossing* is tied to the DS clock, which is of course telling the proper time in the real world, unless you've changed it for some reason. This means that when it's night in the real world, it's night in *Animal Crossing*. The seasons change, too, and while the second screen isn't really used for much, it certainly gives greater scope to some of the gorgeous seasonal sights. Lovely.



the game all over again. Most obviously, the fact that four players can now move around a town *together*, at the same time, and communicate in real-time (by typing – there's no voice chat) is, on its own, something that really changes the texture of the game. Again, there's no goal, but the aimless entertainment it provides makes for a very different type of multiplayer game, and one that, in some ways, is reminiscent of a PC massively multiplayer RPG without all the goblin bashing. Or stats. Or magic. Or… well, you get the picture. It's all about community, and doing all those pointless, trivial things you might do in real life – fishing, digging holes in front of your house, re-arranging the furniture… all that's missing is a picket fence to paint, a raft to ride downriver on, and a dead rat and a string to swing it with.

It's not perfect, of course, as, for example, you can't leave messages for offline friends, or make your own patterns in someone else's village (a safety protocol against online undesirables, we imagine). Nevertheless, *Animal Crossing* appears to have found its natural home on the DS as you can now pick it up and play it whenever you like – you're not restricted to your living room anymore. Familiar it may be, but *Animal Crossing* is still an experience unlike any other.

JES BICKHAM



TAXI!

For reasons that we're still not entirely sure of, the opening train ride to Animal Crossing has been replaced with a journey in a cab for this DS game. And, it's raining. Still, a change is as good as a rest, eh? At least, that's what Geraint says when he puts his skirt on.



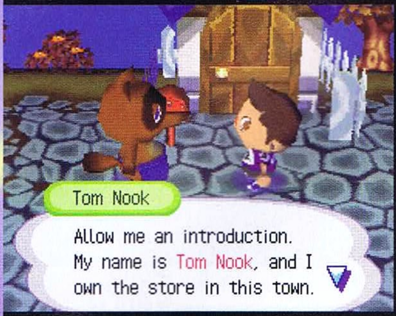
△ **Why doesn't he notice he's the only one with a human head?**

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

The Island of Dr. Moreau, but cuter

HOW TO... LIVE YOUR LIFE

So, what do you do in Animal Crossing? Well, there are plenty of things to do, but unlike a regular videogame, they don't involve bosses or beating levels. It's all about being part of a community.



YOU'RE MY WIFE NOW The first thing that happens once you're in Animal Crossing is that the sinister Tom Nook sets you to work to pay off your mortgage. We hate him.



FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON You'll need to go to his shop and he'll ask you to plant some saplings and flowers. And then you've got some free time! Perhaps he's not so bad after all, eh? Maybe. Not.



IT'S GOOD TO TALK The next thing to do is explore the town of Animal Crossing and introduce yourself to the many freaks that live there. They're always an *interesting* bunch...



TURNING TURTLE One of the people you need to meet is Tortimer, the mayor. He'll ask you what kind of official you like best – choose mayor, eh? It'll make him happy.



NEVER A MOMENT'S PEACE A big part of the game is interacting with the town community, and you'll find yourself running errands for people (well, animals anyway) to get in their good books.



CARPE DIEM But it's not all work, work, work in the town of Animal Crossing. Once you can afford a fishing rod, why not sit by the river bank and cast off, and see what you might catch?



BUG OF LOVE Fishing's not the only way to bother nature in Animal Crossing, though. Get yourself a bug net and you can go catching insects to display in the museum. Lovely.



MAKING MISCHIEF If you're of a mind, you can even play the prankster. Get yourself a spade and go digging potholes for people to fall into. This is especially amusing when online friends fall in.



EVENT HORIZON The message board in town is especially important, as it keeps you notified of special events on the calendar. You'll want to make time for these, as once they've passed, that's it.



HOME IMPROVEMENT One of the biggest concerns in *Animal Crossing* is getting your house in order – the Happy Room Academy will rate you on your in-house furnishings.



ROOM WITH A VIEW Here we present the NGC showcase room. We've got a canoe and an axe: two essential components for modern living in the weird world of *Animal Crossing*.



FREEDOM! Eventually you'll pay off Tom Nook, hopefully before he demands his pound of flesh. Once that's done, you're free to do what you want. Freedom never tasted so sweet.

+

- It's online!
- Better suited to the DS.
- Plenty of little tweaks and improvements.

–

- It's not very different to the Gamecube version at all.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Animal Crossing
Nintendo
NGC/74 90%
The original, if you discount the Japanese N64 version.



7 VISUALS

It's chunky, colourful and as charming as ever.

8 SOUNDS

Catchy tunes and burbling animal-men: everything you need.

9 MASTERY

The online mode is, quite simply, a technical marvel.

10 LIFESPAN

Months and months of stress-free gaming in a tiny little game card.

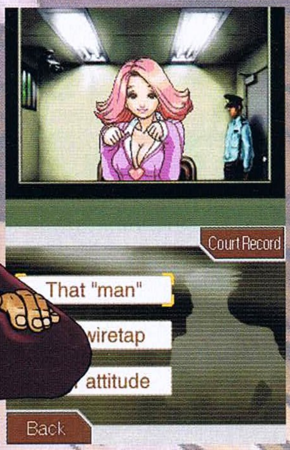
VERDICT

The ultimate *Animal Crossing*: despite its familiarity, this retains the ability to charm your socks off.

NGC **92**

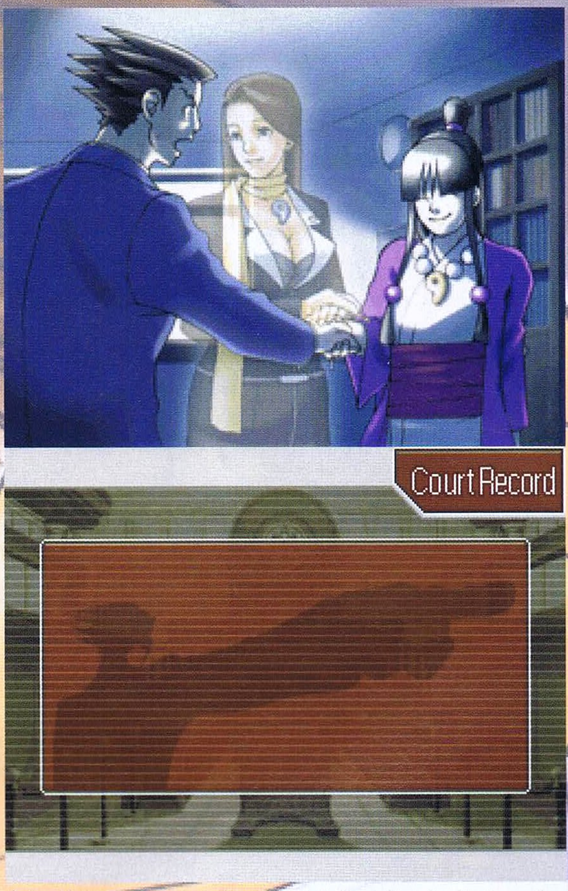
"I'll get to this woman's bottom!"





△ This woman is a terrible flirt.





△ Another case closed – with a little help from the ghostly form of your murdered boss. It's that kind of game.

PHOENIX WRIGHT ACE ATTORNEY

Objection! It's the decided opinion of this court – well, magazine – that the law has never been so much fun…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE	MARCH
PLAYERS	ONE
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	N/A
WI-FI	NO
MIC	YES
COST	£30



P*hoenix Wright* is really extremely good indeed, but we can't help but feel that it doesn't give a particularly accurate depiction of the world of the law. For instance, in the real world we're not sure that senior partners in law firms buy their own office PCs, or that psychics channel the spirit of their murdered sisters so as to help their lawyers. This silliness also extends to pocketing evidence from crime scenes and then dramatically unveiling it in the courtroom, which we're sure isn't quite the done thing. As such, the game never *quite* follows the line of cold, hard logic that you really want it to.

Nevertheless, give into its warped notions and you'll have a whale of a time. It's often laugh-out-loud funny – "I'll get to this woman's bottom!" – and the thrill of solving a case by pinpointing the contradictions in witness testimonies and offering case-solving evidence at the right time is palpable. It is, quite simply, yet another reason why the DS is absolutely brilliant, and another exemplar of the format pushing developers to create new and unique software.

That being said, unless you use up the five 'lives' you get in court, there's only one solution to each case, which you can get to simply by exhausting your options. But the fun of the game is in thinking about what you've seen, and cracking a case before you've meandered your way to the solution by exhausting the dialogue trees.



THE LAW

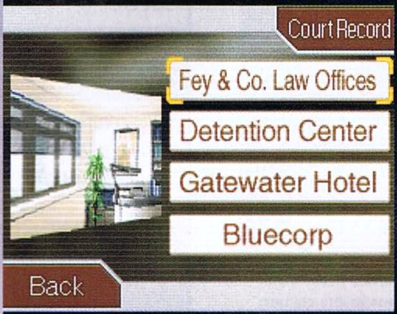
Although the game has been translated wonderfully for the DS, you don't actually have to use the touch screen or the mic if you don't want to. We suggest you do though, as the game is much more fun if you can shout "objection!" at every possible opportunity. Maybe not one to play on the bus, though.

It's split into two halves, really: the splendid courtroom scenes (we had no end of fun shouting "objection!" into the mic) and the Columbo-esque detective work. At heart, the game is a point and click adventure, allowing you to move between locations and examine your surroundings by tapping the touch screen. Items can be added to your Court Record inventory and then presented to both characters and the court. There are reams of text to wade through and, as such, it is thoroughly old fashioned in many ways, but it's also gripping, amusing, and a refreshing reminder that, as with *Advance Wars*, dusty old genres can be revitalised simply by being brilliant.

It's not perfect, of course. The game doesn't eliminate things

ANATOMY OF A MURDER

Taken from the second case in the game, here's a rough overview of how things work in Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney. You're as much a detective as you are a lawyer. Fancy that, eh?



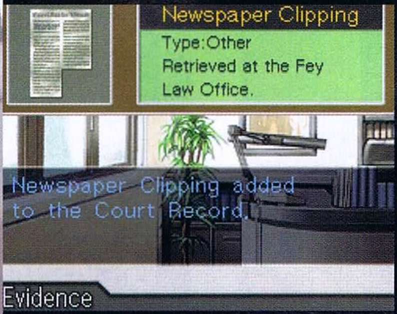
YOU GOTTA MOVE You can move between the different locations in your quest for justice, like the court and the murder scene, with a touch of a button.



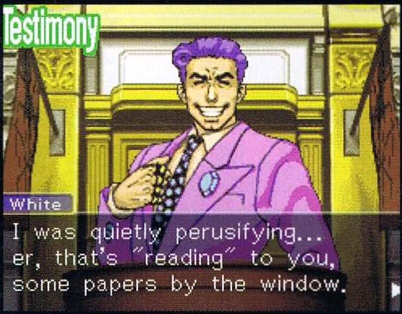
IT'S GOOD TO TALK You can question people at locations, in order to get information and eye-witness accounts that will help you in court.



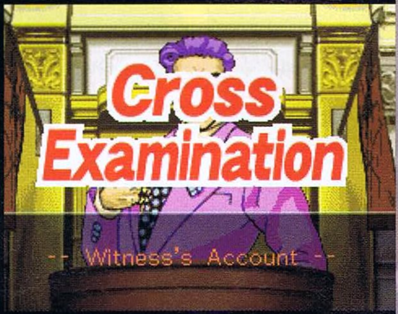
THE SEARCH IS ON Brilliantly, via a handy crosshair or simple stylus tap, locations can be searched for items that may turn out to be useful evidence.



IN THE STUDY, WITH THE REVOLVER Evidence is added to your Court Record, ready to be presented in court. You can look back over these at any time.



IN SESSION Once you go back to court, you'll have to listen carefully to the witness testimony, and decide whether any of it contradicts other statements.



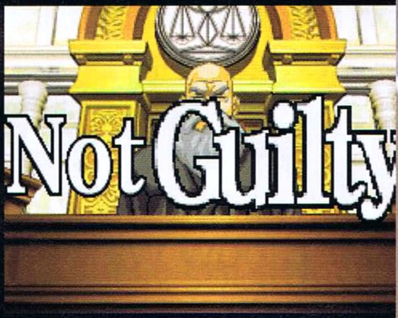
HOLD IT! After that, you're free to cross-examine the witness, and can pore over their testimony – credible or otherwise – in more detail.



PRESS FOR SUCCESS Each 'segment' of testimony can be 'pressed' for information – if any is contradictory, then the real fun starts…



OBJECTION! If you've got evidence that can help you, yelling 'objection!' into the mic allows you to unveil it dramatically before the courts.



THE VERDICT If you're good enough to pick holes in the testimony and back up your claims, success will be yours. From lame to legendary in ten easy hours…

you've already examined, and items and evidence can only be picked up or presented usefully to people at the correct time (f'rinstance, we could only pick up some glass shards once we'd checked the body nearby). This does go a little way towards shattering the illusion that it's *you* doing all the hard work of solving a case, rather than picking the right option at the right time. And there's also the fact that this is a DS retooling of a Japanese GBA game – but, it's been retooled brilliantly, and the addition of a sprawling DS-specific fifth case to crack means that this can quite safely proclaim itself to be one of the format's best games. Who know that being a lawyer could be so much fun? If only we'd studied harder at school. Sigh.

"IT IS, QUITE SIMPLY, ANOTHER REASON WHY THE DS IS ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT"

JES BICKHAM



△ Your arch-rival, Miles Edgeworth, gets banged up in 'chokey'. Serves him right, the self-important fop.

+

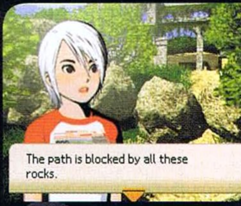
- Funny and fresh.
- A superlative adventure game.
- Objection!

–

- Really only one way through the game.
- Not exactly an audio/visual wonder.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Another Code
Nintendo
NGC/108 4/5
A short but sweet adventure with some innovative puzzling.



VISUALS
Nice manga-esque visuals, but it's all a bit static.

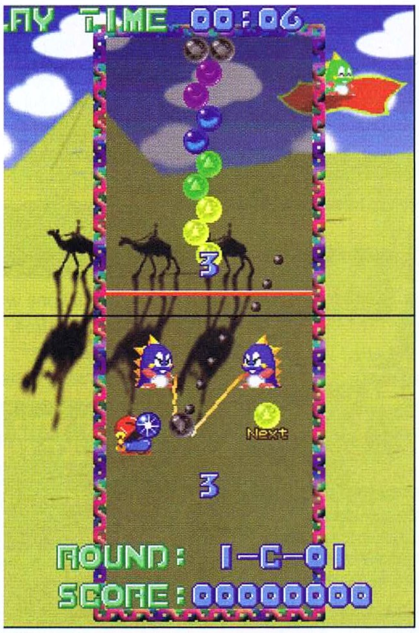
SOUNDS
The constant tapping of text-scrolling, but jaunty tunes.

MASTERY
The cleverness is in the implementation, not the technology.

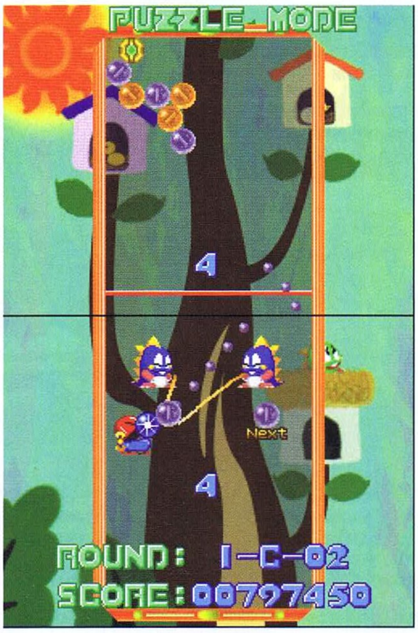
LIFESPAN
Five fat cases to crack – it'll last you ten hours at least.

VERDICT
Wackier than Ally McBeal, but in a good way. Addictive and amusing lawyerly hi-jinks.

NGC 82



△ Touch, drag, miss – the way of the stylus.

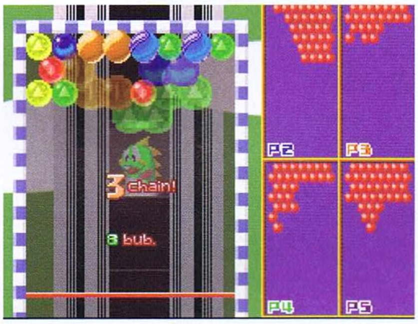


△ We switched to D-pad controls very quickly.



△ Multiplayer games show your opponents' screens in the corner.







△ You can pick from eight characters for cosmetic effect.

BUST A MOVE

Classic puzzler, now with added fingers of fun

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER	TAITO
OUT	NOW
PLAYERS	1-5
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE-CART LINK	YES
COST	£30



When some bright spark came up with the idea of making coloured blobs vanish by connecting three of them, he can't have predicted that somebody else would end up turning it into a sort of shoot-'em-up.

Which is what *Bust-A-Move* is.

You fire bubbles from the bottom of the screen and match them up with the quivering cluster descending from above. Disposing of critical links makes whole chunks of bubbles fall off in the most impossibly satisfying manner.

It's an all-time classic, and there are probably three or four variations available for every system you've ever owned, plus free versions you can play on the internet. So what makes this first DS edition worth your money?

The big new feature here is the touch screen control – you have to finger a little catapult to fire bubbles with analogue precision.

> **"YOU HAVE TO FINGER A LITTLE CATAPULT TO FIRE BUBBLES WITH ANALOGUE PRECISION"**

It's the control method pioneered in one of the minigames from *Mario 64 DS*, but here we found it easier to aim using the traditional D-pad system. Because precision placement of each bubble is the key to success, you'll often need to fine tune your angles, pixel by pixel, using the shoulder buttons, and that's something you can't do when using the none-too-accurate touch screen.

There's also the option to swap your current bubble for one held in reserve, which is a common feature in many puzzle games but a new addition to the *Bust-A-Move* series.

And that's your lot. While it remains the nifty, addictive sort of ten-minute challenge you can return to almost indefinitely, we can't help but feel a little short-changed by it as a DS package. Chief among its competition is *Meteos*, which is unusual, spectacular and packed with game variations. Then there's the unique and stylish *Polarium* to consider, and the mouth-wateringly Nintendo-ish, online-enabled *Tetris DS* is just around the corner.

It's worth a pop, but we'll keep our fingers crossed for a definitive DS edition in the future.

MARTIN KITTS

+

- Five-player, single-cartridge link mode.
- Uncluttered main screen.

–

- Precision aiming is unduly difficult.
- Gimmicky control method.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Meteos
Bandai
NGC/108, 5/5
Superior DS puzzle action with loads of variations and excellent music.



6 VISUALS
Clear and functional, but low resolution hampers accuracy.

6 SOUNDS
Typically tinkly tunes in the *Bubble Bobble* tradition.

5 MASTERY
The forthcoming *Tetris DS* will make this look very plain.

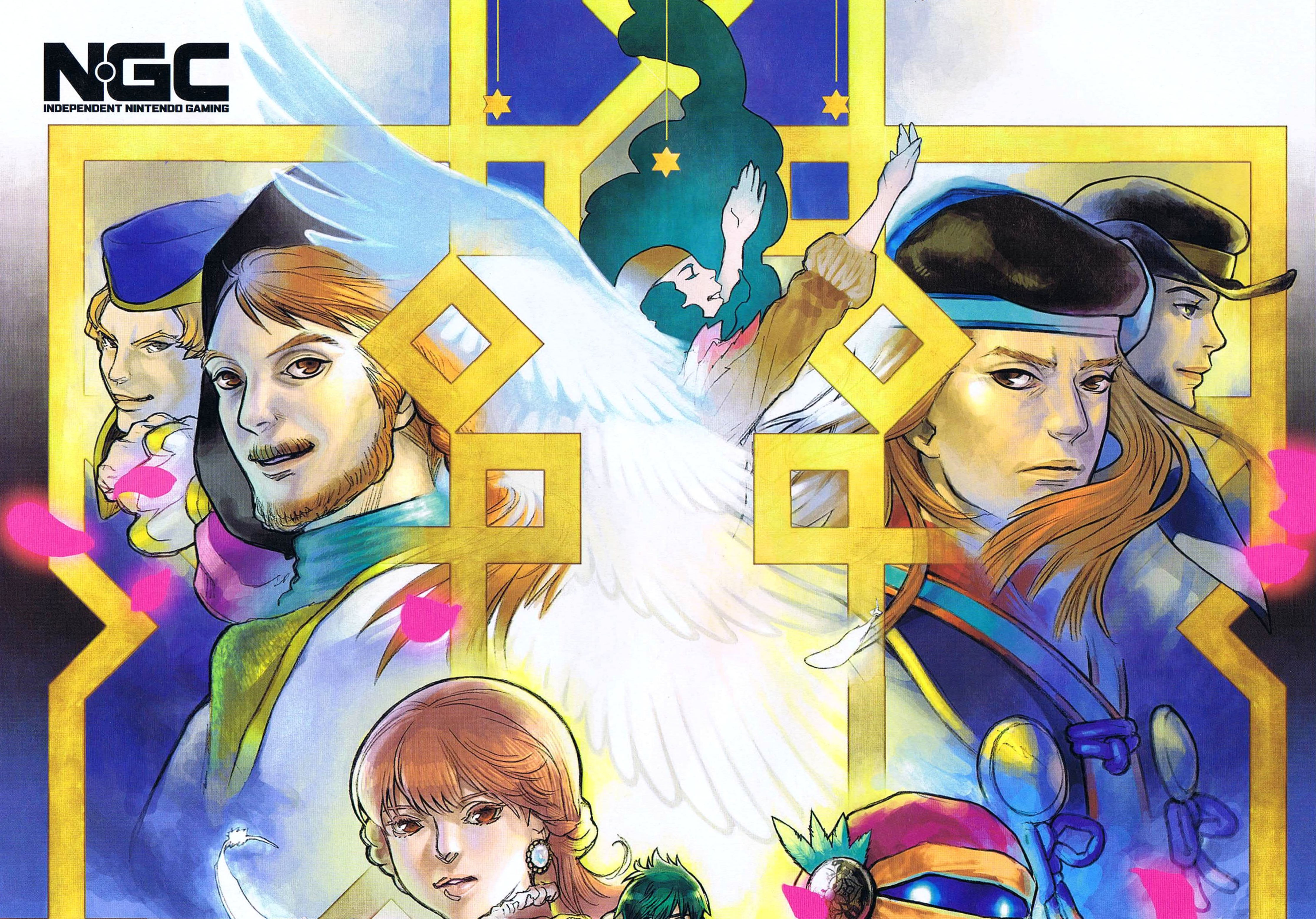
7 LIFESPAN
Multiplayer is great, and the main reason for *BAM* to exist.

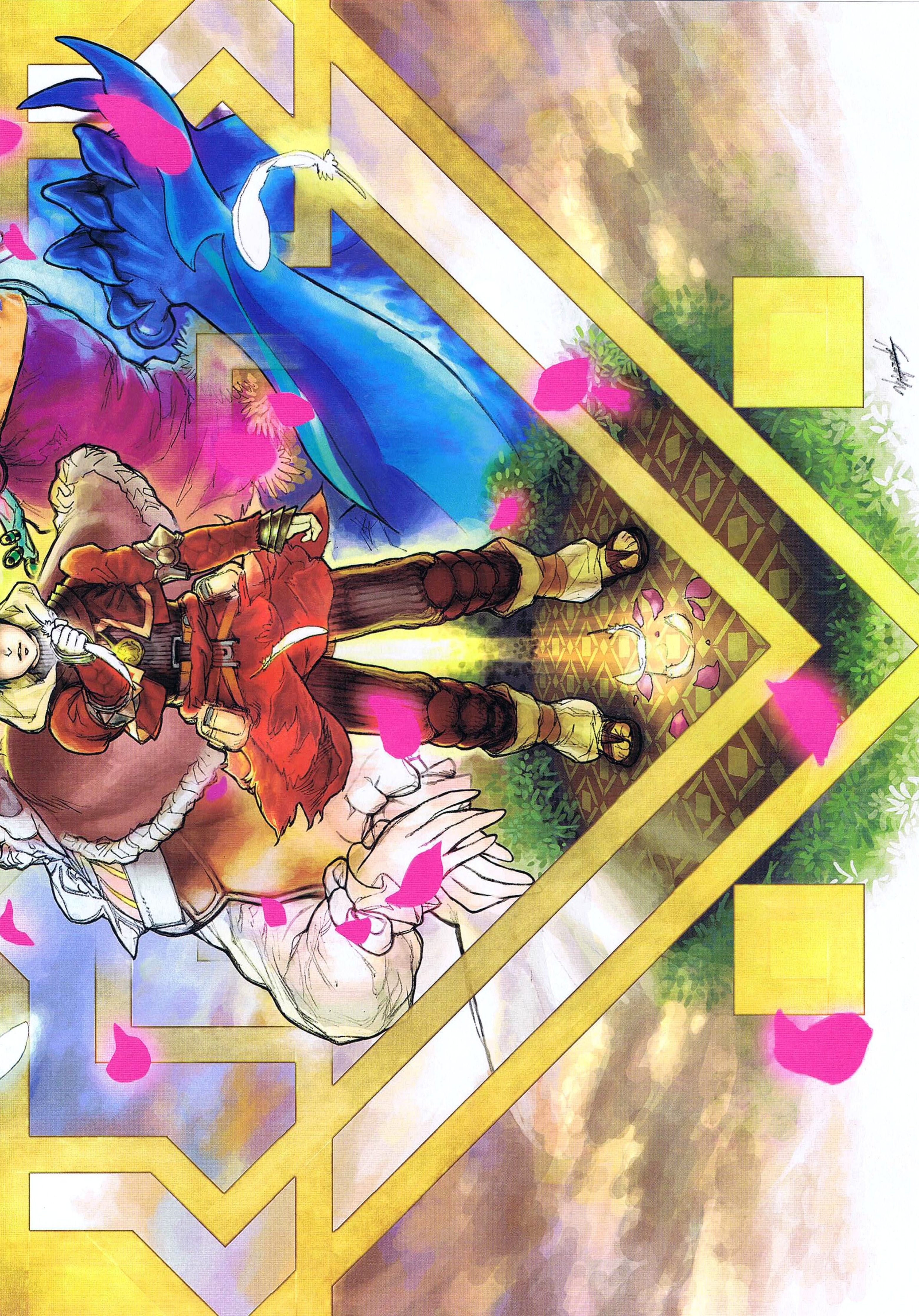
VERDICT
Forget the weird controls and it's just *Bust-A-Move* all over again. A reliable, sensible puzzle choice.

NGC 70

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING




NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING







Now with robots you have to nail to death



△ The battle of drill versus drill. Drill wins every time.



△ Levelling up gives you a strengthier spin.





△ Someone at Game Freak is clearly mad.



△ The animation is cuter than a baby panda.



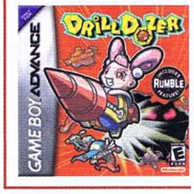
△ Another block crushed. Who'd be a block?

DRILL DOZER

You know Mr Driller. Now meet his soulmate

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	GAME FREAK
OUT	NOW (US), MAY (UK)
PLAYERS	1
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE-CART LINK	TBC
COST	$30 (ABOUT £17)



Wait – what? Game Freak? The *Pokémon* people? Blimey. After a decade of nothing but screeching maul-o-monsters, Satoshi Tajiri and his crew have suddenly and inexplicably invented a game about a girl sitting in a great big drill. And, what's more: it's brilliant.

Drill Dozer is closest in look and feel to *Wario Land 4*, but where Wazza had to catch fire and eat cakes to conquer puzzly-ish platform levels, Game Freak's Jill just ploughs through everything with her rotating drill bit o' doom.

That's the beauty of it: the drill whines like a drill, it rumbles like a drill (thanks to built-in cartridge judder) and it *feels* like a drill. Using the L button (to whirr one way) or the R button (to whirr the other), shifting up through three gears to batter down even the stubbornest of walls *literally* rocks.

"THIS IS A GAME ABOUT A GIRL SITTING INSIDE A GREAT BIG DRILL, AND IT'S BRILLIANT"

Every level has some clever spin (ha!) on the whole idea – narrow screw-sided tunnels; vice-like clamps that drag you through the air; robots that you have to nail to death. The fixed route through each room makes *Drill Dozer* as much a satisfying mental challenge as a screen-juddering rumble of spinny metal rage. Shame that later levels overdo it on 'invisible solutions' though. For example, if you smash a block, a hidden tunnel will materialise from nowhere. But still, you do get to *fly* later on, so all is forgiven.

It looks *fantastic*, too. Having to design 386 pokémon hasn't sapped Game Freak dry of character-creating magic juice: everything from Jill's mad anime hair bunches to the expression on the faces of the little samurai police dudes is exquisitely designed. And *Drill Dozer* isn't scared of filling a level with pretty flowers and dozing bunny rabbits, either. Good.

It's all over pretty quickly and there isn't much in the way of extras, but *Drill Dozer*'s a little beauty all the same. And not a Pokémon in sight.

MARK GREEN

+

- Clever rumbly drill-based play.
- Looks that show 2D *must not die*.

–

- Some obscure, unclear puzzles.
- Might be too linear for some.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Wario Land 4
Nintendo
NGC/62, 5/5
Unhinged Ninty-designed platforming brilliance that goes 'Waaaah!'



8 VISUALS
Crystal clear and super-cute cartoony 2D. We love it.

6 SOUNDS
Meaty drilling noises and tunes like a musical enema.

6 MASTERY
Rumble is good, but a Black & Decker power drill is cheaper.

6 LIFESPAN
Hidden areas abound, but it's a short, sweet ride.

VERDICT
Bouncy platforming with a unique – wait for it – *twist*. More non-Pokémon stuff please, Game Freak.

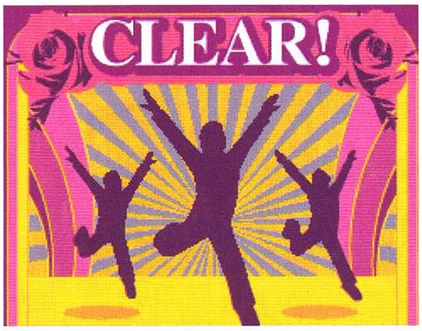
NGC 82



"Do it until you stop caring about the silhouetted object of your desire"



△ It all looks so good, so smooth: shame there's no real game there.



△ In Memories mode you can aim for scores rather than struggle with story.



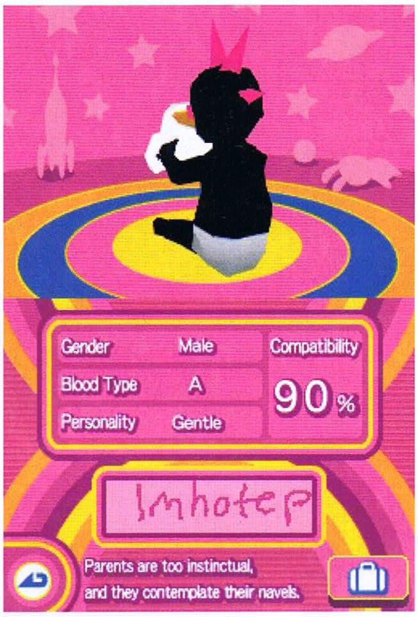
△ Now that is slick. Just lunge forwards and pretend you fell off your unicycle.



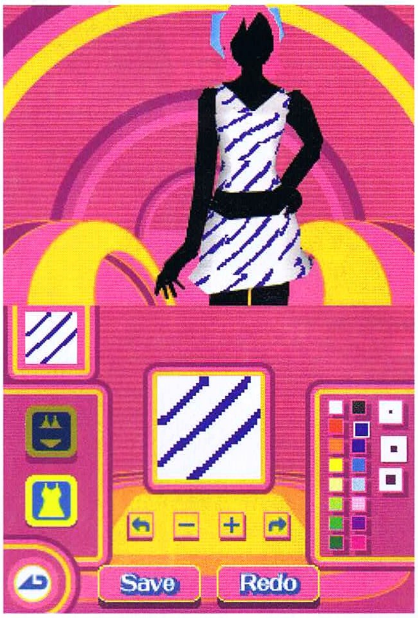
△ Since you can see clothes on your lady, these chaps must be all nekkid.



△ Baby Making rates a couple's compatibility via cake cutting.



△ Your offspring are sent into the world with WiFi.



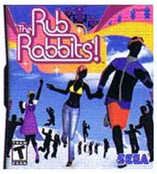
△ Design your own nasty clothing patterns.

THE RUB RABBITS!

Are the rabbits rampant or just Watership downed?

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SEGA
DEVELOPER	TEAM SONIC
RELEASE DATE	10 FEB
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	YES
WI-FI	YES
MIC	YES
COST	£30



The clue is in the name: mini-games. Games that are mini. Levels so small, so ephemeral, that once Wario's cackle has faded and you've slapped the kitten onto the seesaw, they are over, never to be seen again. Blink, BANG! end.

Instead, *The Rub Rabbits*' 35 lovelorn levels torment you with both length and girth. They all start out simply and stylishly enough: row the log past the crocs, catch the cakes or dodge the crabs. Then, you do it again and again, harder and faster, until you stop caring about this silhouetted object of your desire and wish the feeble-minded fool was spayed with a dull spade, and hammers.

For novelty, as with love, familiarity breeds contempt. So while the original *Project Rub* stood out as the definitive launch title with its unique use of mic, stylus and dual screen, this slightly improved sequel has no default right to fame. So while *Rabbits* finally offers a quick start option, the chance to create your own mutated child and even play upside down, the feeling is definitely one of familiarity, and then contempt.

"THE RETURN OF THOSE BULLS AND WOBBLING UNICYCLES MAKES YOUR HEART SINK"

Despite there now being more meat to beat in each level, there are a few in here that smack of filler. The 'Virus' level, with its endless procession of pop-up windows, is so close to surfing the web for grot and grumble, as to be as much fun as urinating open-mouthed into a hurricane. When combined with the return of those bulls, wobbling unicycles and sand shifting games *yet again*, it just makes your heart sink.

And that is *Rub Rabbits*' problem. Like bouncing on the bed, it once seemed like the most fun possible in the world, but we've moved on. Now other titles have added story and depth to the simple harnessing of the DS's capabilities. Or, they simply offer more blink, bang, bang for your buck. But, while it lasts at least, this is enjoyable, joyous, colourful, same-as-last-time chaos. Come in *Project Rub* and *Rub Rabbits*, your fifteen Warholian minutes may just have ticked by.

ALEX COOKE

+

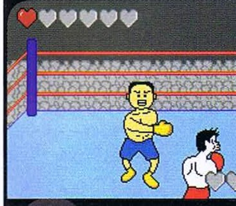
- No repeating boss battles.
- Restart without delays.

–

- A few repeats from *Project Rub*.
- Virus, an ideas-free level.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Wario Ware Touched!
Nintendo
NGC/103 5/5
Blam! Cackle, Vroom, Crump, end. Madness, but in perfectly bite-sized bits.



8 VISUALS
Lovely motion, lovely design and lovely everything, in 3D.

8 SOUNDS
A wonderful collection of oohs and tunes. The speech annoys a little.

8 MASTERY
Every part of DS tech is used for something just a little bit weird.

4 LIFESPAN
Quickly dismissed in solo mode, the multiplayer is also pretty brief.

VERDICT
Sequels can't be unique, and without any novelty there isn't enough fun to last the day. Less than the sum of its slick parts.

NGC 70



It's retro, but not as we know it



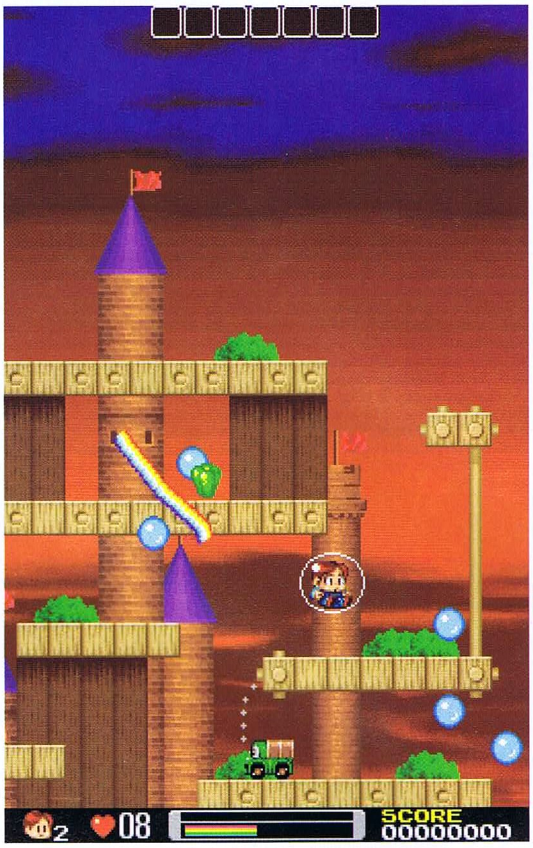
△ Things can get mighty busy.



△ Avoid monsters at all costs!







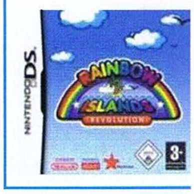
△ You can move anywhere simply by dragging your little man – Bubby or Bobby – around the screen with the stylus.

RAINBOW ISLANDS REVOLUTION

A trip back in time or something completely new?

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	RISING STAR
DEVELOPER	RISING STAR
RELEASE DATE	MARCH
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
WI-FI	NO
MIC	NO
COST	£30



First things first: this isn't the *Rainbow Islands* that you remember. The main character doesn't run, or jump, or fire rainbow arcs in front of him, and despite the fact that you're doing the same things that you've always done in *Rainbow Islands* (killing monsters with rainbows, for fruit and diamonds) it's all completely different.

> **"RAINBOWS ARE CREATED BY STROKING ANYWHERE ON THE TOUCH SCREEN"**

Retro fans may well be coughing and spluttering into their tea right now at the fact that the purity of *Rainbow Islands* has been meddled with, but if you forget that, what you've got is an entertaining little game that uses the DS well. And, to be honest, it's brave of Rising Star to update the game (or create a new one, depending on your point of view) to fit the hardware. It won't please everyone – in fact, we're sure it'll offend plenty of people: the **NGC** office, for example, is neatly divided as to its merits – and it really might as well be called something completely different, given the gulf of difference between this and the original, but the bottom line is that it's fun.

So now your character floats in a bubble, and can be moved anywhere around the screen via the stylus. Rainbows, used to kill enemies, are created by stroking anywhere on the touch screen, and the game trades on the tension that exists between the need to move and the need to kill monsters, as you can't do both at the same time. It's a neat system that fits the DS well, and special rainbows can be drawn that have different effects – triangles hoover in enemies while five-pointed stars act as smart bombs.

Sadly, the top screen is rather neglected, simply offering you a view of what's ahead, but otherwise this is good fun. It's no *Yoshi's Touch and Go* or *Kirby Power Paintbrush*, games which feature similar mechanics, but if you can tell yourself that this isn't *Rainbow Islands*, it's a new game called *Rainbow Islands Revolution*, then you'll find much to enjoy. And you can't say fairer than that.

JES BICKHAM

+

- Excellent use of the touch screen.
- Brave reinterpretation of a classic game.

–

- It's definitely not the *Rainbow Islands* of yore.
- Can get a tad repetitive.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Bubble Bobble Revolution
Rising Star
NGC/113 1/5
A far less successful update of another revered classic. Not as good as this.



6 VISUALS
Heartwarmingly cute and colourful, but very basic.

5 SOUNDS
Irritatingly bouncy tunes, unless you like that kind of thing.

7 MASTERY
Really does make excellent use of the touch screen.

8 LIFESPAN
Respectable single player, plus iffy multiplayer modes.

VERDICT
View this as a new game and not a remake of a classic one and you'll find some colourful, stylus-waving fun.

NGC 68

"Turn defeat into an undeserved three-nil win"



△ It might be a shot, it might be a backpass, you never know what each button press will bring.



"FORGET THE GLORY OF LAST-GASP WINNERS AND GOAL-LINE CLEARANCES"



△ The locations may change but these purely cosmetic changes are surely a missed opportunity.



△ Your player's AI often sees them stood still rather than moving into position for a pass.

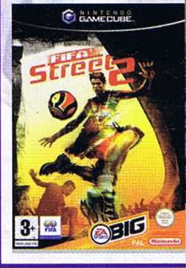


FIFA STREET 2

Urbane and concrete or utter tarmac and cobblers? We'll give you one guess…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA BIG
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM CARD PAGES	17
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



Goals win games. This is the kind of truism that trips from the lips of squeaky-headed division two nonentities every week of the season, but like all clichés it contains a nugget of truth so elemental, so fundamental, so self-apparent, that you might be surprised that the chaps behind *FIFA Street 2* missed it.

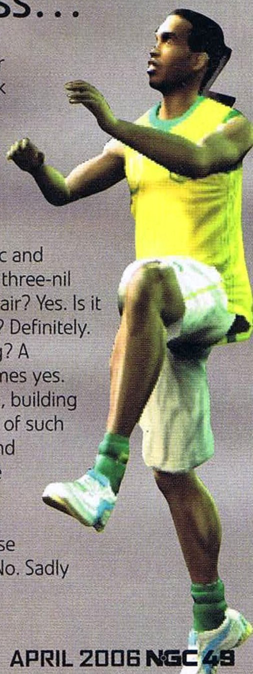
For in their world it is points and over-powered power-ups that decide games, not bulges in the onion bag. In fact, in some modes, scoring can often harm your quest for victory so tap-ins go un-tapped, one-on ones are deliberately fluffed and thirty yard thunderbolts go unstruck. Forget about the glory of last-gasp winners and dramatic goal-line clearances, instead you sneak to victory with tiny tricks, anti-climatic flicks and randomly triggered lollipops.

But *FIFA Street 2* isn't just divorced from real football, it's paid its legal costs and cuddled up to someone new – the fantastical and often farcical Quidditch.

The reason for this split is a new Gamebreaker that does exactly that – breaks both the game and your will to carry on. Where other flippant football titles might reward your skill with an unstoppable shot or second goal, *FIFA Street 2*'s power-up is an unstoppable smart-bomb, a thermonuclear device that wipes out the opposition's score, multiplies your own and even gifts you an automatic win.

So with just a few button presses and the unskilled twitch of stick, your foe can chalk off three of your hard-fought goals and turn defeat into an automatic and undeserved three-nil win. Is it unfair? Yes. Is it unbalanced? Definitely. Is it cheating? A thousand times yes.

Of course, building up a bar full of such awesome and unstoppable magical power must take immense skill, right? No. Sadly



"At its worst, playing feels like trying to lasso jelly"

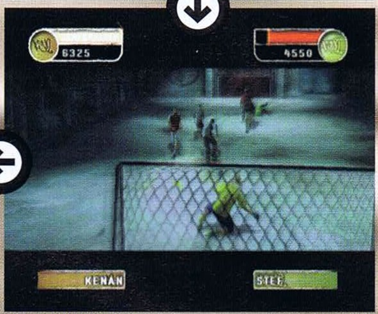


GAME BREAKER

Able to lay waste to entire continents and flatten nations, the Gamebreaker can end a match in seconds. All you need to do is activate it, fumble with two buttons and get a shot on target. The 'keeper won't be able to stop it and the win will be yours.









Δ Darren Fletcher shows off his Cruyff turn. Satire!



Δ Every tat and top can be edited or changed. We're just not sure why.



Δ In a fairly pointless bonus mode you can master a variety of juggles, flicks and generally pointless keepy-up moves.











the expansion of *FIFA Street 2*'s system has meant allocating more seemingly random moves to more seemingly random directions on the C- Stick. For your part all you need to do is sellotape down L and R while throwing the yellow nubbin in any direction you desire and any number of perplexing twists and turns will be unleashed, leaving you mystified as to how the ball and player ended up in that position without teleportation or contortionism.

These slightly random controls cause another problem when combined with the long and unbreakable animations – a feeling of only being only remotely in control. Too often your Trick Stick twitches take an age to reach your player's feet because he is still halfway through the last spin or step-over you requested. The result is magnified further during defending as sometimes you aren't able to tackle a player mid-animation as the game can't seem to break the flurry of frames to let you take the ball.

"JUST SELLOTAPE DOWN L AND R WHILE THROWING THE YELLOW NUBBIN AROUND"

At its worst, playing feels like trying to lasso jelly; the manual player selection is painfully clumsy, the artificial intelligence seems too much of the former and not enough of the latter, and the 'keepers swing from impassable psychic stoppers to shovel-handed buffoons at a moment's notice. And the shooting, oh the shooting! Managing to be both too fiddly and at the same time imprecise, it permits only blasting the ball by not offering you the chance to chip, drill or float the ball. As for

WESTWAY TO WEMBLEY

Ruling The Streets is the aim of the improved solo mode.



When you just need to score goals to win games, the football can be simple, fun and relatively slick.



When the quest for points is added, thing become bogged down in the centre circle as it is easier if you keep away from the 'keepers.



When Gamebreakers are the only currency, players turn away from open goals and leave the ball when hammering it home seems easier.



Without scoring goals deciding things there is little drama and almost no tension. Instead, the end of a match feels arbitrary and abrupt.



snapshots or rebounds, you might as well not bother.

But, in spite of all this, there are still tiny moments of joy to be found. Tiny, tiny ones. Moments when a flicked pass is controlled, chipped and hammered into the back of the net in one fluid, sweeping up-field movement. Moments when scoring more goals than your rival actually matters. Moments when your pained persistence in endlessly improving your players' stats pays off. It might be the same relief a prisoner feels at the break between being transferred from the Rack to the Iron Maiden, it might be Stockholm Syndrome, but it is there, particularly if you can convince friends to join your suffering.

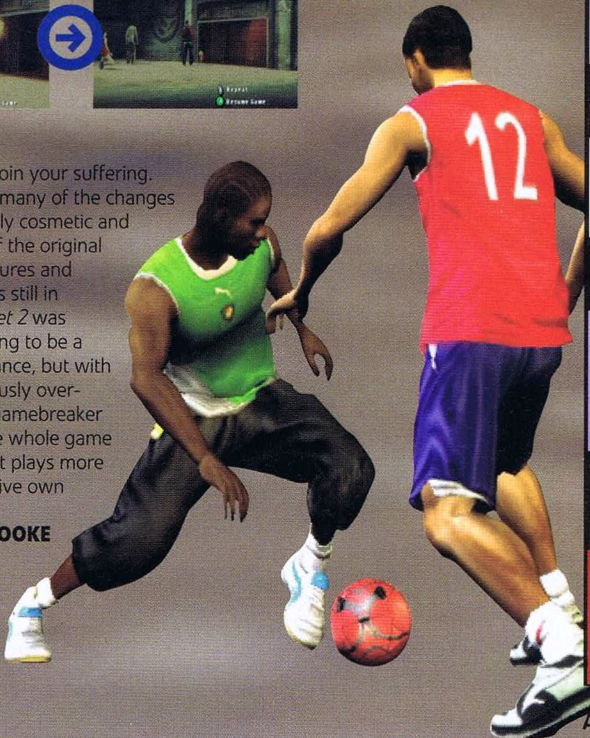
With so many of the changes being purely cosmetic and so many of the original game's failures and frustrations still in place, *Street 2* was always going to be a missed chance, but with the ludicrously over-powerful Gamebreaker making the whole game lop-sided, it plays more like a decisive own goal.

ALEX COOKE



FILTHY PITCH

A footballer not only has to look the part, he also needs a tidy home ground. And FIFA Street 2 includes all of this this So you can add watches, hats, tattoos to your player and even create your own home pitch, right down to the colour for the goalposts.



+

- You get to design your own pitch.
- Every goal is earnt.
- A bigger solo mode.

–

- Painfully 'urban' still.
- 'Football' as designed by J.K. Rowling.
- The Gamebreaker.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

NBA Street V2
Electronic Arts
NGC/84 88%
All the tricks, but with a sport that fits.



6 VISUALS
Surprisingly gloomy backdrops with ungainly animation.

6 SOUNDS
Zane Lowe shouts but the spot effects are So Solid enough.

5 MASTERY
More port than Dover harbour when the ferries roll in.

7 LIFESPAN
The tedious novelty modes drown the fun of simply scoring goals.

VERDICT

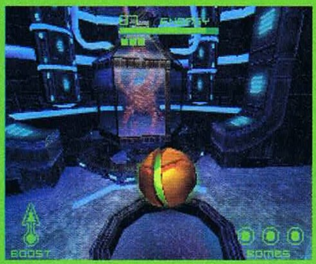
Tilted too far into fantasy, FIFA has become as unbalanced as Didier Drogba on ice.

NGC 61

NEXT MONTH

The hunt is on...







METROID PRIME HUNTERS

The best DS game yet? Read the definitive verdict of Samus' latest adventure in issue 119 of NGC!

PLUS!

- *Chibi Robo reviewed! (Honest!)*
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FRE

**Don't go thinking Nintendo's all about the
Here are 20 of Nintendo's most freakish**

GANONDORF



So your alter ego's an Empire State-sized swine-nightmare from hell's 78th level – but he *still* probably gets more dates than you. No surprise, with a conk like that: Link's arch-nemesis only needs a little top hat to look like one of those drinking bird toys. It wouldn't hurt to smile once in a while, either. In a way that *doesn't* look like you're plotting the fiery destruction of an entire kingdom.

Freakiest feature:
The kind of face you get from blow-drying your hair behind a 747 engine.

HORROROMETER:

GRUNTY



Cursed with the same carrot-nosed genetic misfortune as Ganondorf – perhaps she's *his mother* – *Banjo-Kazooie*'s rhyme-addled witch also has the kind of chin that you could happily hang your coat on. The all-over green look is something you won't be seeing on a Laboratoire Garnier advert near you, either. It could be the stress of getting her wart-encrusted arse handed to her by a trailer trash bear carried around on a bird's back; or Grunty's the kind of girl who has three Kellogg's Radioactive Plutonium Rods for breakfast.

Freakiest feature:
Quite nice legs and cute shoes, too.

HORROROMETER:

TINGLE



Look at him. From the tip of his pointy chump-hat to the ends of his comfort-first elfen shoes, *Zelda: Majora's Mask*'s Tingle has messed up every square inch of his embarrassing outfit. We'd love to know which Hyrule tailor is handing out advice like "The skintight green lycra suit is very much the style this season," and "Red pants on the outside? Ah, yes, sir, that's very *you*." Plucked eyebrows and man-breasts: what a combo. Excuse us while we go and throw up in the toilets.

Freakiest feature:
The nose – replace it with a ripe fruit of some sort and no-one would notice.

HORROROMETER

IWAZARU



Effortlessly achieving a look which combines the dubious fashion sense of Tingle with the questionable (and undoubtedly not wholesome) hobbies of the *Pulp Fiction* gimp, Iwazaru (the Japanese name for the 'speak no evil' monkey) just doesn't feel equipped to dispense a helpful hint to *Killer 7*'s killers unless he's kitted out in abseiling gear and a leather dog collar. "We're in a tight spot! A real tight spot!" Yes, yes: just get down off the ceiling and stop speaking like a metal pipe in a major thunderstorm, you big frickin' weirdo.

Freakiest feature:
More than one kind of monkey, he's seeing no evil, too – *this is because his eyelids are stitched together.*

HORROROMETER:

AKS!

**cute, just because of those pesky Nintendogs.
characters that will make your eyes weep blood...**

TIMBER THE TIGER

Hard to believe that there was actually a Timber fanclub set up on the 'net – easier to believe that it hasn't been updated since 24th February 2001. *Diddy Kong Racing*'s tiger earns 'Freak!' status on account of the eyes: the permanent expression of someone who smells smoke on the way home and suddenly remembers they forgot to turn the iron off. Timber was promised his own game if he blinked, *just once*. Still waiting.

Freakiest feature: Needing the loo on *DKR*'s character select screen. Wait – he's *dancing*?

HORROROMETER:



GOBLIN WOMAN

"The intro demo pans away gradually to reveal a drug-addled, maniacally grinning hunchbacked GOBLIN WOMAN," sobbed Jes in his review of *XG2* back in century 20. "Woe betide anyone unfortunate enough to cross her cackling path." To be honest, we quite fancy her. But 'goblin woman' still belongs in our list of freaks because of the riled letter we got from Acclaim, 'politely' asking us to stop taking the mick out of her. They're bankrupt now. We win!

Freakiest feature: Her back – although she *is* crammed inside a bike the size of a chinchilla.

HORROMETER:



FUNGILA

By Taito's own description, *Bust-A-Move*'s Fungila is an "incoherent watchdog" belonging to "a fashionable old man who aims to take over space by the time he is 2,038 years old". Sure. We see him more as the kind of psychedelic fright-monster that your brain would turn down for a role in your worst nightmares because it was "way too scary". So the question is: will you be hypnotised by the spiral eyes first, or the gaudy, hooped technicolour dreamcoat? The answer is: neither. *He's already eaten you alive.*

Freakiest feature: Rainbow-coloured back hair? Somebody should pass that dog a razor.

HORROROMETER:



JANE

And we thought *Animal Crossing* was supposed to be *cute*. Jane is, simply, a gorilla wearing lipstick and eye shadow. And lots of it. It must be hard for a girl-illa to get taken seriously when her face-fur is all clogged up with lippy and her legs are one tenth the size of her head – which must be why she ends every sentence she speaks with the word "chimp". Our advice is pretty simple: stick her in a transparent ball and roll her off a platform. That'll learn her.

Freakiest feature: The first kiss.

HORROROMETER:



FREAKS!

"What is wrong with his head?"

VOLDO



It's not so much the look of *Soul Calibur 2*'s kick-punching freak that repulses us so much – it's his writhing way of somersaulting around the arena like the scariest member of some kind of evil insect-based Cirque du Soleil. Chewing on his Mouth-Bandage™ like a dog sucks on a slipper, he's certainly effective with those knuckle-blades – but just imagine what it's like when he gets an itchy nose.

Freakiest feature: Arching his back, flipping over and walking on all fours. The girl out of *The Exorcist* did the same thing for a scene in the film and they decided to delete it for being too frightening. Fact!

HORROROMETER:

THE GINGERBREAD MAN

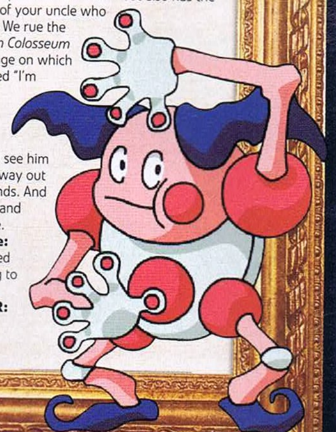
Run away, run away – it's the Gingerbread Man! "Looks like someone used too much raising agent," says *TimeSplitters 2* with a sardonic grin, immediately before the savoury horrors are smashing windows with their rocket launchers and roly-polying through doorways to give us the chills. "You won't be taking a bite out of *us*!" we yelled, bravely, then ran away from the telly and hid under the nearest duvet.

Freakiest feature: The angry look on their icing-drawn faces. Scariest food since green crisps.

HORROROMETER:



MR MIME

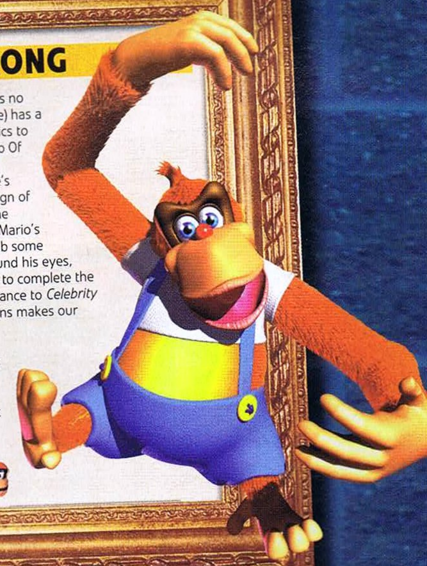


We've always reserved a special little sachet of bile for Mr Mime, who isn't simply the most useless Pokémon in existence – uh, special skill: mime – but also has the face and attitude of your uncle who thinks he's funny. We rue the day that *Pokémon Colosseum* gave him a 3D stage on which to perform his tired "I'm trapped in an invisible box" routine. We'd like to trap him in a real glass box and see him struggle to find a way out with his mime-hands. And watch him slowly and painfully suffocate.

Freakiest feature: Bony double-jointed elbows. He's going to die alone.

HORROROMETER:

LANKY KONG



"He has no style, he has no grace/This Kong (pause) has a funny face" ran the lyrics to The Worst In-Game Rap Of All Time. Funny? It's a prime example of Rare's 'special' character design of the late 1990s: take one monkey, dress him in Mario's stolen dungarees, daub some make up clumsily around his eyes, then stick a cherry on to complete the package. The resemblance to *Celebrity Big Brother*'s Pete Burns makes our spines shudder.

Freakiest feature: That horribe little tuft of hair. Just imagine what it would feel like, brushing against your face. *Brrr.*

HORROROMETER:

WILLIAM BIRKIN



Height: 178cm. Blood type: O. Distinguishing features: *Giant moving eye growing out of his shoulder.* Birkin must have been kicking himself over his decision to inject *Resident Evil 2* G-Virus into himself. This eye-shouldered freak is just the earliest of five different forms he took, one of which saw him growing arms out of his arse. By the time he was walking on all fours and dribbling from a new mouth in the middle of his chest, we were glancing at our watches and politely making for the exit.

Freakiest feature: In the second stage, all the skin's been ripped off his head. One for the ladies.

HORROROMETER:

ZODA



Only in the mad world of *F-Zero GX* would someone with purple skin choose to wear purple clothes. But we're not here to punish bad dress sense; we're here to punish a man with a giant tube coming out of his brain and a face that makes a skull look healthy. Oddly, the tube "pumps adrenaline and dopamine" into his body, resulting in "crazed tendencies" – he's using the *F-Zero* races to raise money for his diabolical world-conquering schemes. *Surely* there's a rule against that?

Freakiest feature: Try the giant adrenaline-tube coming out of his head.

HORROROMETER:

GENERAL HERMAN

What is wrong with his head? The poor guy's obviously been in some kind of industrial accident, but he insists on drawing attention to his pencil-eraser Head Of Horror with the kind of haircut we haven't seen since Bros (ask your mum). We've just noticed his stubby little hands, too – it must be like trying to shake hands with a child's doll. No wonder he's got a Hula girl tie on: you've got to have a sense of humour, looking like that.

Freakiest feature: A mouth that looks like he's caught in a wind tunnel.

HORROROMETER:



MA

We know what you're thinking: beached whale. If ever religion needed a solid argument against the march of science, there's Ma; the obvious result of genetically splicing the DNA of Fern Britten, a sumo wrestler and a corpse. Not that Ma could necessarily be described as 'solid' – when she moves, the sweat produced by lugging those rolls of lady-fat about must transform her into a near-liquid state. Believe it or not, we have a picture of her naked, but we're keeping it to ourselves for your own safety and mental well-being.

Freakiest feature: A tie between the man's haircut, the quadruple chin – and the flies buzzing around her face.

HORROROMETER:



CHANNEL Z

You know, we're not even sure who this chap is, having successfully erased most memories of playing *Gex 64: Enter the Gecko* through a long course of psychotherapy and running head-first into the fridge. But, you know what? We're convinced he's up to no good. Poor lip design has led to more dripping saliva than a labrador in a steak factory, and, like Edward Scissorhands, Channel Z has inconveniently-placed blades that means he can never truly love. Or take the tube without causing some kind of serious incident.

Freakiest feature: Digital readouts on the shoulders. Usefully placed, those.

HORROROMETER:

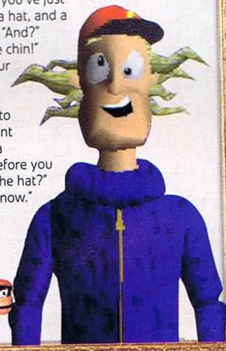


DWAYNE

"Bad news for you, John. We need one more character for *Micro Machines*" "But it's 5.30pm on a Friday! I've booked the cinema!" "I need it before you go." "Okay, okay… give me a sec…" (scribbling) "There, done." "John, you've just scribbled some hair, a hat, and a pair of googly eyes." "And?" "You've forgotten the chin!" (scribbling) "John, your pencil slipped there." "No, no, that's what the chin's supposed to look like." "Magnificent work, John." "Cinema beckons!" "Wait… before you go… what's under the hat?" "You don't want to know."

Freakiest feature: The left eye is a clear winner.

HORROROMETER:

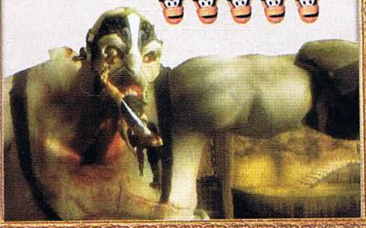


KLOMPA

Now, now, ladies, calm down. He's got beefy arms that'll wrap you up warm and snug, to be sure. But Klompa from *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones* has intimacy issues – try to get too close, and he has a tendency to roar like a wounded God and smash you in the chin with his ten-ton warhammer. And could you actually snog his dripping gore-jaw without committing the relationship *faux pas* of vomiting all over his dead man's breasts? Nice arse, though.

Freakiest feature: He hasn't actually noticed he's got arrows sticking out of his back.

HORROROMETER:



WALUIGI

Contrary to popular belief, the moniker 'Waluigi' is not simply a straightforward extension of 'Wario' – despite the use of the upside-down L in a similar way to Wario's reversed W. The Japanese adjective 'Warui' means 'bad' – hence the contraction of 'Warui' and 'Luigi' can be taken literally to mean 'evil Luigi'. Similarly, one Japanese pronunciation of Waluigi – 'Waruiji' – could be read as a subtle play on 'ijiwaru', or 'mean-spirited'. Also: he's a diabolically hideous freak of nature.

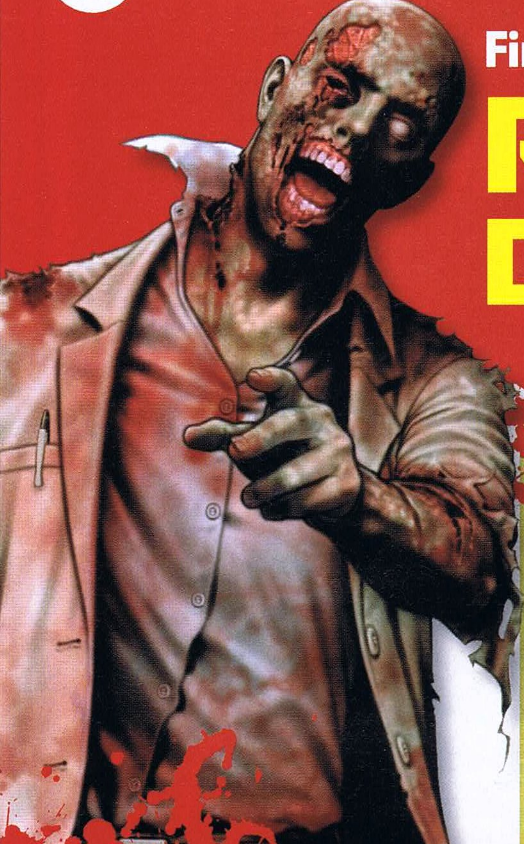
Freakiest feature: Waluigi's nose has been in need of cosmetic attention since he was invented.

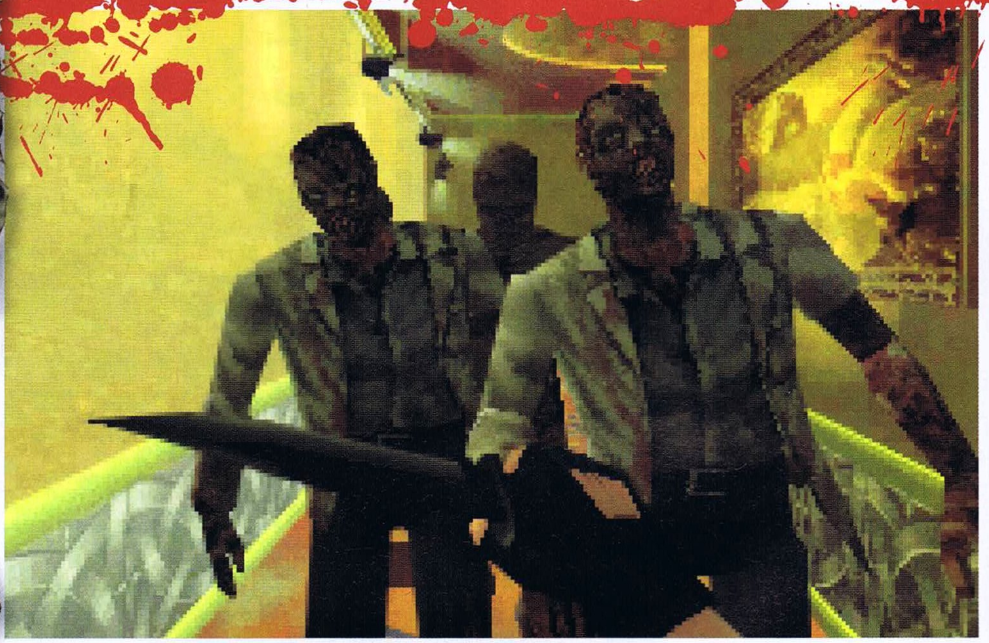
HORROROMETER:



Finish the game in record time...

RESIDENT EVIL DEADLY SILENCE





△ Three groaning zombies – check. One effing huge gun to kill them with – che-wa-what? I just have this knife? Oh sh-

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

For ten years, the halls of the Spencer mansion have beckoned to a legion of horror fans. Now, you can relive the horror on your Nintendo DS, fighting the horrors of the Umbrella corporation in Resident Evil: Deadly Silence. Survive the horror in style, with the help of NGC's exclusive guide!



WHAT WE SAID

A decent 10 hours of single-player, plus a multiplayer mode too. The game has great music and the most terrible voice acting you've ever heard. *Deadly Silence* manages to stay relevant through good design, creepy atmosphere and some neat DS-specific touches.

NGC 79

Note: *This walkthrough focuses on Rebirth Mode. Classic Mode has no touch screen puzzles, much less ammunition, and many items are found in the same places.*

THE BEGINNING

JILL:

Use the door by the fireplace and take a left to meet your first zombie. Kill it and search Kenneth's body for two clips of **Handgun Bullets**, then return to the dining room.

Go back to the front hall and go upstairs. When you come back down, Barry will give you the **Lockpick**.

CHRIS:

Use the door by the fireplace and take a left to meet your first zombie. Stab it in the legs to knock it down and kill it. Search Kenneth's body for **Handgun Bullets**, then return to the front hall to find Jill's **Handgun**.

Go upstairs and west to the dining room balcony. Leave to the north and go downstairs. The door under the stairs is the infirmary, where you'll meet Rebecca. Take the **Sword Key** off the bed.

FINDING THE MAP

Return to the lobby and go east via the statue room; you can push the stepladder over to it to reach the **Map of the First Floor**. Otherwise, unlock the eastern door and go down the infamous "dog hallway"; if you push the second empty display case, you'll find **Handgun Bullets** underneath.

HALL OF DOORS

Past this, you'll find a hall full of doors. The first leads to a small garden full

KNIFE FIGHTING

You'll find your first knife fight in the statue room. Knife fights are "random encounters," frequently but not necessarily triggered when you enter certain areas via certain doors. If you can win without taking a hit, you'll often find two or three rounds of **Handgun**, **Shotgun**, or **Magnum ammo** or a **Green Herb** afterwards.

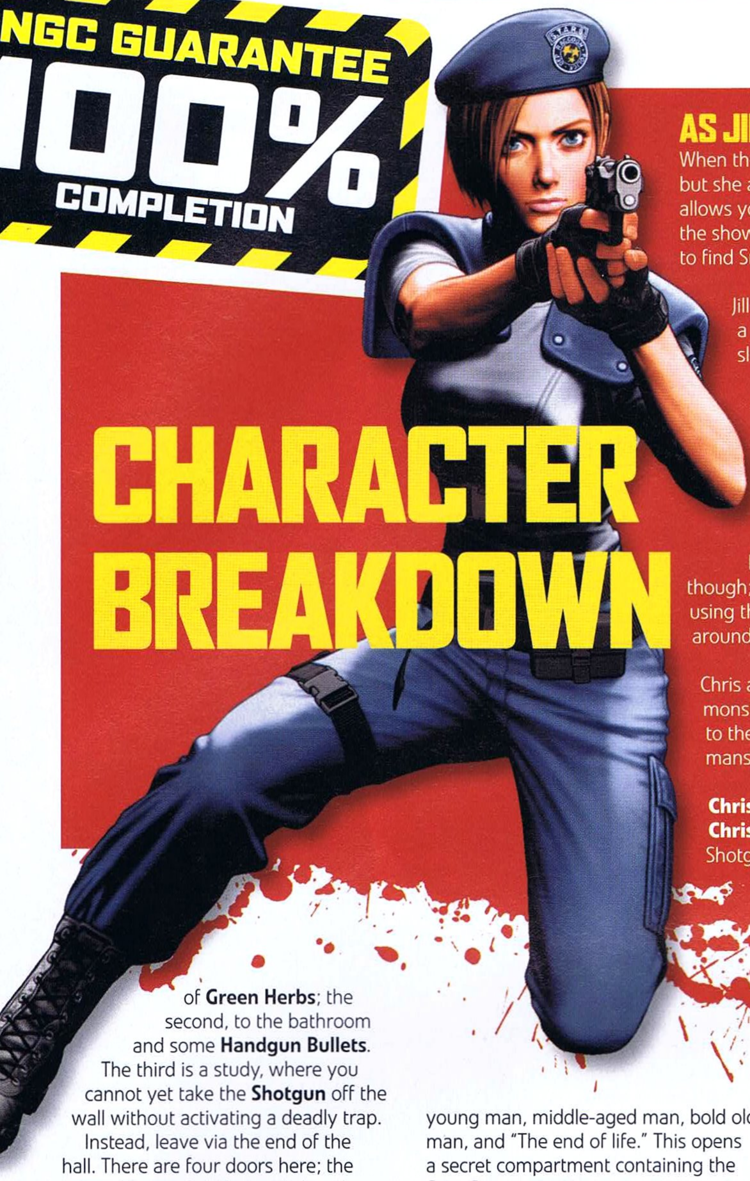
Tap the touchscreen for a quick stab, and drag the stylus for a slash. Slashes are slower, but knock enemies off-balance and prevent them from attacking you. If you stab or slash an enemy right before they attack you, you'll counter the attack and instantly kill a standard opponent. This is a vital tactic against Hunters.



RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE

Win, win, win… get those snakes and dog-type things

NGC GUARANTEE 100% COMPLETION



CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

AS JILL:

When they say "Easy," they aren't kidding. Jill has more item slots, but she also gets more ammunition and easier puzzles. The Bazooka allows you to exploit enemies' weak spots, rapidly ending fights like the showdown with the Yawn. Jill's Lockpick means she doesn't have to find Small Keys or the Sword Key.

Jill's low health means you'll want to always leave room for a healing item, such as two mixed Green Herbs. She's also slower than Chris, so you'll need to kill more enemies.

Jill's Starting Items: Handgun, First Aid Spray x2
Jill's Item Chest: Handgun Bullets x60, Shotgun Shells x28, Green Herb, Red Herb, Blue Herb

AS CHRIS:

Chris has roughly twice as much health as Jill, and he's much faster. Only having six item slots costs him, though; you'll have to use Green Herbs more like power-ups, using them as you find them rather than carrying them around.

Chris also gets much harder puzzles, less ammo, more monsters, and the Magnum is surprisingly weak compared to the Bazooka. He must find the Sword Key to explore the mansion, and must use Small Keys to open locked drawers.

Chris's Starting Items: First Aid Spray
Chris's Item Chest: Handgun Bullets x60, Shotgun Shells x14



of **Green Herbs**; the second, to the bathroom and some **Handgun Bullets**. The third is a study, where you cannot yet take the **Shotgun** off the wall without activating a deadly trap.

Instead, leave via the end of the hall. There are four doors here; the ones at the end of the room lead to a gallery and the path to the mansion's guardhouse. The guardhouse door is locked and requires four Crests to open; this is your first goal.

IN THE GALLERY

In the gallery, you'll find a puzzle. Check the larger painting by the entrance, then press the switches underneath the following paintings, in this order: newborn, infant, lively boy, young man, middle-aged man, bold old man, and "The end of life." This opens a secret compartment containing the **Star Crest**.

Leave the gallery, then unlock and go through the green door. You've just reached the east safe room, near the stairs; there's a **Green Herb** outside and a **Chemical** inside.

Backtrack via the 2F east hall to the west wing of the mansion.

AS JILL:

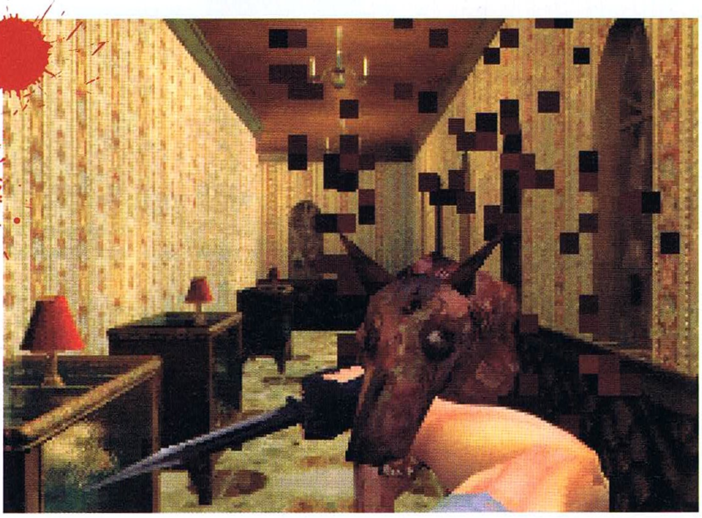
When you return to the balcony above the front hall, you'll get **Acid Rounds** from Barry. Visit the southwestern door to find the **Bazooka** on Forest's body; watch out, as he'll reanimate.

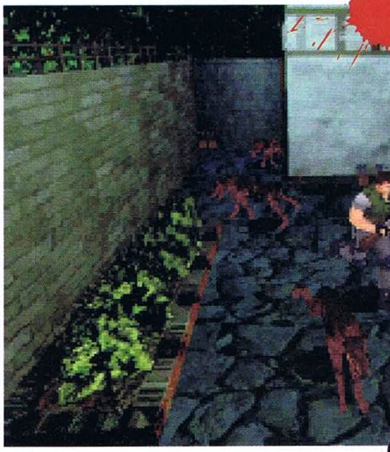
AS CHRIS:

Visit the southwestern room to find a **Small Key**. Forest is holding **Handgun Bullets**.

IN THE GREENHOUSE

Return to the dining room's balcony, and push the statue through the hole in the railing. Go through the northern door and downstairs, then past the infirmary to the end of the hall. In this greenish area, your goal is the east exit, which leads to the greenhouse.





△ I love the smell of wet, evil, killing machine dog-type-things in the evening…



Δ Don't try this one at home, guys: the knife almost never misses the fingers.



Δ In this portion of the game, whoever spreads their legs the widest, wins.



Δ And here's generic zombie #342. His hobbies are biting and growling.



(You can also open the southwestern door in the green hallway with your Sword Key/Lockpick. Inside, you'll find **Handgun Bullets**, **Shotgun Shells**, and the **Keeper's Diary** file.)

In the greenhouse, use the **Chemical** on the open pump to kill the plant. The **Armor Key** is waiting politely behind it, as are four **Green Herbs** and two **Red Herbs**.

USING THE PIANO

Return to the green hall and unlock its southern door, and cut through the 1F west hall to the dining room. Take the **Emblem** and **Blue Gem**, the latter of which is in the wreckage of the statue.

AS JILL:

In the 1F west hall, unlock the easternmost door with your Lockpick to reach the bar. Push the bookcase in the corner to find the **Music Notes**, and use them on the piano to open a secret door. Enter, and swap your Emblem for the **Gold Emblem**.

Return to the dining room and install the Gold Emblem over the fireplace. Set the grandfather clock to 3:00 to reveal the **Shield Key**.

AS CHRIS:

In the 1F west hall, unlock the easternmost door with your Lockpick to reach the bar. Push the bookcase in the corner to find the **Music Notes**, and use them on the piano. Rebecca will show up; let her mess with the piano for about ten minutes while you go do something else.

When you return, she'll open the secret door. Swap the Emblem for the **Gold Emblem**, then go back to the dining room and install it over the fireplace. Set the grandfather clock to 3:00 to reveal the **Shield Key**.

USING THE TIGER STATUE

Go to the green hall, and as you head north, take a right into the small side room. Install the Blue Gem in the tiger statue to get the **Wind Crest**.

AROUND THE EAST HALL

It's time to cover some ground. Open the door around the corner from the infirmary, and take the **Broken Shotgun**, **Handgun Bullets**, and **Shotgun Shells** (inside the locked drawer). Now you can go to the east hall's study and swap the Broken Shotgun for the **Shotgun**.

Bring your **Armor Key** to the 2F east hall and unlock its west-facing door. Place the scales on the stones to balance them out, and you'll unlock the case. Take the **Sun Crest**.

ABOVE THE EAST HALL

While you're in the area, unlock the bedrooms above the east safe room. The west bedroom contains a **Red Herb** and the **Lighter**; the east, the **Researcher's Will** file. You can also drain the aquarium with the switch on the wall, then push it and the bookcase out of the way to find a secret compartment. Inside are **Explosive Rounds** (Jill)/**Shotgun Shells** (Chris)

Finally, in the 2F east hall, unlock the final Armor Key door to find Richard Aiken, who is either dead or dying.

THE SPECIAL DOOR

The **Armor Key** opens the northeastern door in the front hall, which leads to the makeup/changing rooms. On your first playthrough, you can find some **ammo**, **Herbs**, and an **Ink Ribbon** here, but you can't open the costume room. Once you beat the game, you'll start your next playthrough with the **Special Key**. Now you can get into the costume room and don your character's alternate outfits.





Δ Here's a tip: virtual blood is easy to wipe off your DS but not your soul.



Δ "You see, this is my dance space. That, over there, that's *your* dance space..."

RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE

Win, win, win… get those snakes and dog-type things



REVIVING RICHARD

AS JILL:

Blow rhythmically on your DS's microphone to resuscitate Richard. If you manage it, he'll survive long enough to tell you a secret: set the clock in the dining room to 8:12 to get **Shotgun Shells**.

AS CHRIS:

Richard is dead when you get there. Search his body for **Handgun Bullets**.

CHRIS'S PLOT BRANCH

You have to go a bit out of your way to do it, but Chris can get the Armor and Shield Keys before he visits the infirmary and meets Rebecca. If you go to the attic first, you'll find Rebecca, frantically trying to keep Richard alive.

She'll ask you to fetch the **Serum** for Richard, which is in the infirmary. If you do so, Richard will stay alive long enough to tell you about the dining room clock secret and give you the **Comm. Radio**. If you use the Serum on Chris or waste time returning to the attic, Richard will die and Rebecca will distrust you.

A VERY LARGE SNAKE

Moving on after the death of Richard (having mourned him appropriately first, of course) the room straight past him leads to the attic. In the small dining room, check the corner cabinet for **Handgun Bullets**, then use the **Lighter** on the candlestick and push back the bookcase. You'll find **Acid Rounds** (Jill)/**Shotgun Shells** (Chris) inside the pantry.



△ Oh look, there's another wound here, and here, oh and another up here…

Finally, unlock the door to the attic. Inside, you'll find **Shotgun Shells** and, in the far corner, the **Moon Crest**.

There is also a very large snake.

Don't bother fighting it. Instead, fake it away from the Moon Crest, grab the crest, and get out of the attic as fast as you can. What happens next depends on whether it bites you or not.

AS JILL:

Jill will collapse and wake up in the infirmary with full health. Onward!

AS CHRIS:

You'll take control of Rebecca. You must race across the mansion to get the **Serum** out of the infirmary, then return to Chris. You can make Rebecca's job much easier if you, as Chris, wipe out all the monsters between the attic and the infirmary before you go to face the snake.

Once you've been treated, or if you somehow niftily manage to escape without getting bitten at all, you can go and install all four crests in the guardhouse door.

EVEN MORE SNAKES

In the storage shed, take the **Crank** off the shelf (Chris will also find a **Small Key**). In the garden proper, you can find three **Green Herbs**, two **Red Herbs**, and two **Blue Herbs**. Take what you need, then head north and use your Crank to drain the waterway. Cross, but move quickly, as snakes will drop out of the trees.

Cross the garden courtyard to the only other available door: the guardhouse entrance. Dodge the dogs and crows; they won't be here when you leave, but the two **Green Herbs** will be.

IN THE GUARDHOUSE

In the guardhouse's front hall, push the statue over the hole in the floor. Then, ransack the hall; you'll find two **Blue Herbs** and a **Green Herb** by the door, **Explosive Rounds** (Jill)/**Handgun Bullets** (Chris) and a **First Aid Spray** in the safe room. **Handgun Bullets** are in the guardhouse lounge. The **Red Book** is in the northern dorm room.



△ Don't shoot until you see the whites of its eyes – from the *inside*.



△ Anyone who's approaching death right now, put your hand up.



△ Just another tunnel or the inside of a giant snake? The choice is yours…

TREASURE CHESTS

In Rebirth Mode, there are **blue treasure chests** inside each of the game's safe rooms. If you solve the puzzle attached to each one, you can get at the valuable items inside. How many pirates can say they battled past zombie dogs to get to these, eh?

Legend:
CCW = counterclockwise
CW = clockwise
Click = touch the central jewel

JILL

Mansion, West Safe Room: **Red Herb**
2 CCW, click; 2 CCW, click

Mansion, Infirmary: **Red Herb**
2 CCW, click; 1 CW, click; 2 CW, click; 1 CW, click

Guardhouse, Safe Room: **Shotgun Shells**
1 CW, click; 3 CW, click; 2 CW, click; 3 CW, click.

Underground, Safe Room: **Explosive Rounds**
1 CW, click; 1 CCW, click; 3 CW, click; 1 CW, click; 2 CCW, click

Laboratory, B2 Safe Room: **Magnum Rounds**
Click; 2 CCW, click; 1 CW, click; 3 CCW, click

Laboratory, B3 Safe Room: **Magnum Rounds**
1 CW, click; 4 CW, click; 1 CCW, click; return to starting position (three up, one down), click

CHRIS

Mansion, West Safe Room: **First Aid Spray**
Click; 2 CW, click; 2 CW, click

Mansion, Infirmary: **Shotgun Shells**
1 CW, click; 1 CW, click; swap blue and green gems

Guardhouse, Safe Room: **Shotgun Shells**
1 CW, click; 1 CW, click; 1 CW, click; 1 CW, click

Underground, Safe Room: **Magnum Rounds**
Click; 2 CW, click; 2 CW, click; 3 CCW, click

Laboratory, B2 Safe Room: **Magnum Rounds**
Click; 3 CCW, click; 2 CCW, click; 3 CW, click; 1 CW, click; 3 CCW, click

Laboratory, B3 Safe Room: **First Aid Spray**
4 CW/CCW, click; 3 CW, click; 3 CW, click



△ No, wait, you can't shoot me – I'm the DS owner! Without me you're just pixels!



△ Even giant plants just want to be held sometimes...

IN THE DORM

Chris will find a **Small Key** in the dorm, and there are **Shotgun Shells** inside the locked desk. Enter the dorm's bathroom and unplug the drain, then take the **Comm. Room Key**.

Finally, go south, and follow the hallway around to the first door. Grab the **Dormitory Key** off the table under the beehive, then run like hell back to the hall. Your new key unlocks the hall's north door; if you're hurt, push the statue first to find three **Green Herbs**.

THE NORTH DORM

There are **Handgun Bullets** in this dorm's bath, the **Guardhouse Map** is on the wall, and the **Plant 42 Report** is on the bed. Unlock the desk for **Shotgun Shells**, then push the bookcases to find a ladder and descend.

Push the first crate against the far wall, then shove the next two into the water. Now you can shove the third in with them to form a makeshift bridge. Take the two **Green Herbs**, then descend into the Aqua Ring (Chris should visit the northeastern room for a **Small Key**; also note the roots here).

THE AQUA RING

Once you cross to the west side of the room, run for the southwestern door ASAP before the Neptune eats you, and throw the switch. Use your stylus to close the valve, thus draining the water and immobilising the Neptune.

Check the wall by the control room door for a puzzle. The solution is, from left to right, 8 4 3 5 9 1 2 6 7; input this to unlock the Arms Room. There, you'll find **Handgun Bullets**, **Shotgun Shells**, and another **Dormitory Key**.

PAST THE BEEHIVE

The last locked door is back in that room with the beehive. Unlock it: there are **Flame Rounds** (Jill)/**Shotgun Shells** (Chris) in the bathroom, and the **V-Jolt Report** is in the bookcase. Replace it with the **Red Book** and leave via the secret door for a boss fight.

PLANT BOSS FIGHT

AS JILL:

There are two ways to do this. The fast way is to circle the room, pausing in each corner to fire a single Flame Round at the plant. Barry will arrive shortly thereafter to finish the job.

The slow way is to visit the chemical locker directly opposite this dorm room. Solve the simple puzzle to unlock the door, then grab three **Empty Bottles** off the shelves. Fill one bottle with No. 2, then fill a second bottle with Water. Mix Water and #2 to make #3. Get #4 from the shelf and combine it with #3 to get #7.

Mix #4 and #2 to get #6, and mix it with #7 for #13. Finally, recreate #3 by mixing Water with No. 2, then blend #3 and #13 to get **V-Jolt**.

Return to the Aqua Ring and use **V-Jolt** on the roots to make Plant 42 wither. Return to the dorms and destroy the plant with your Bazooka.

AS CHRIS:

If you told Rebecca to come with you, you'll take control of her at this point. Go to the chemical locker and mix up **V-Jolt**, as above, then head to the Aqua Ring and use it on the plant's roots. You, as Chris, will then have to finish Plant 42 off with Shotgun blasts; it'll take roughly twelve hits.

If you told Rebecca to stay put or if you failed to save Richard Aiken, you'll have to kill Plant 42 on your own. This will take a long time and about twenty Shotgun shells.

BACK TO THE MANSION

Afterwards, take the **Helmet Key** from the fireplace and return to the mansion. It's now infested with Hunters.

Open the study by the guardhouse exit to find **Magnum Rounds**. In Rebirth Mode, there's also an **MO Disk**.

USING THE HELMET KEY

The other two doors the **Helmet Key** opens are in the hall above the infirmary in the west wing, and on the west end of the balcony above the east safe room (notably, you'll find **ammunition** and a **First Aid Spray** waiting for you in that safe room).

Go to the former room first; inside, you'll find the **Orders** file, **Magnum Rounds**, and **Shotgun Shells**. Blow out the candles on the table with three quick exhalations into your DS's mic. That'll allow you to see and take the **Red Jewel** from the deer head.

Return to the green hallway and install the **Red Jewel** in the tiger statue to get the **Magnum**. Pump your fist once in the air. Move on.

BALLROOM BOSS FIGHT

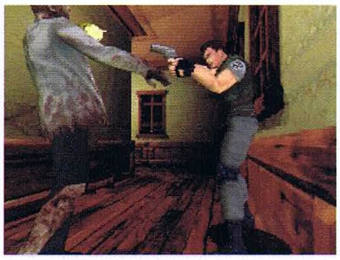
The final **Helmet Key** door leads to a ballroom. Spin the record with your

DOOM BOOK I

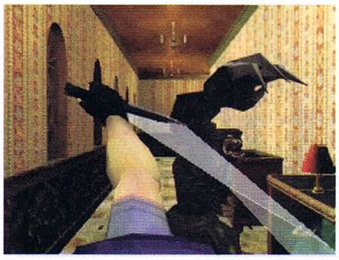
The big difference between Classic and Rebirth Mode is where you'll find the first **Doom Book**. In Classic Mode, it's in the study in the mansion's east wing, and can be found once you have the **Helmet Key**. In Rebirth Mode, you must find **Eric's Letter** in the mansion's west library; this will trigger a special boss fight in the room where you fought Plant 42. Winning that fight will allow you to find the **Doom Book**.



△ Scene 1: Zombies enter, looking wistfully into each others' eyes.



△ Scene 2: "No romantic lovescene for you, zombie scum," yells our hero, Chris.



△ Scene 3: "Don't bother sending out your mother-in-law to be either, boyo."



△ Scene 4: The knife wedding 'twixt Jill and zombie, as Capcom intended.

Win, win, win… get those snakes and dog-type things

BESTIARY



△ It's weird – the wind just changed and he was stuck like this… Poor Kevin.

HUNTERS

These killing machines have been decapitating *RE* fans for a decade. If they catch you at low health, they'll finish the job with a flying rake that'll take your character's head off. Otherwise, watch out for their quick slashes, and a flying jump attack that can cover a deceptive amount of ground.

The moment you see a **Hunter**, level it with a Shotgun blast. When it's back on its feet, fire again, repeating the process until the Hunter's dead. It'll let out a characteristic scream when it does so. You may also want to use the Magnum for a one-hit kill.

When knife-fighting Hunters, keep them off-balance with slashes, much as with zombies. If it pulls back and pounces at you, wait for its arm to go back before slashing; with the right timing, you'll counter the attack and kill it with one hit.



CROWS

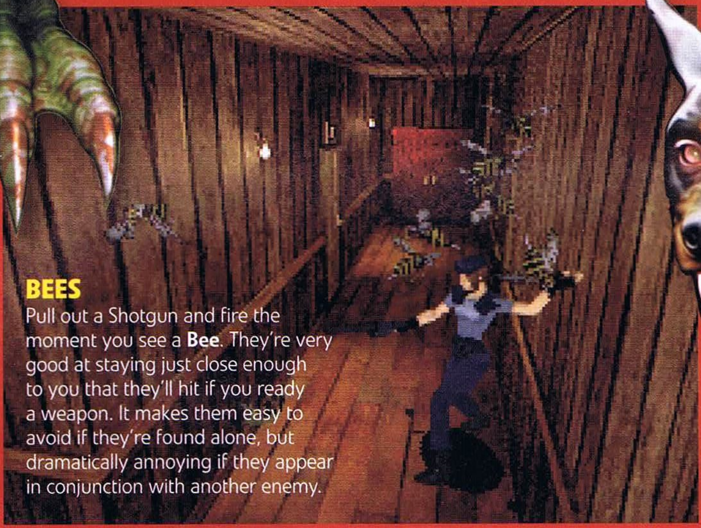
Crows are most dangerous when encountered in conjunction with other monsters. Wait for a crow to rush you, then run a step forward. It'll often settle to the ground briefly, allowing you to finish it off with a single knife stab or Handgun bullet.

When knife-fighting crows, remember that –in some ways – they're the most dangerous foes, in that they can appear anywhere on screen. Wait for one to establish its position, then go for a quick stab to kill it.

CHIMERAE

The most durable standard enemies in the game, **Chimerae** can cling to ceilings, use a dangerous pounce attack that'll knock you flat, and absorb up to three Magnum bullets before kicking over. And even worse luck – if they appear at all, there are at least three of them.

There is never any good reason to fight a Chimera, and their speed makes doing so difficult. If you see one, run.



BEES

Pull out a Shotgun and fire the moment you see a **Bee**. They're very good at staying just close enough to you that they'll hit if you ready a weapon. It makes them easy to avoid if they're found alone, but dramatically annoying if they appear in conjunction with another enemy.



Here's a puppy that said NO to agility trials and novelty hats.

DOGS

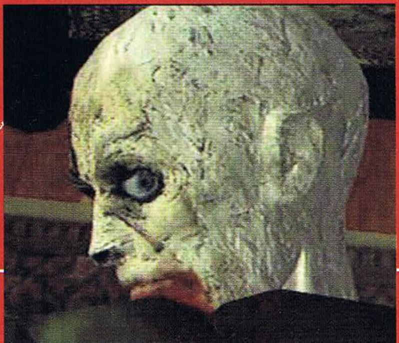
The **Cerberus** bioweapon is dangerous, particularly in packs. If one's found alone, knock it down with a single Handgun bullet, then stab it to death while it's on the floor. If you encounter multiple dogs, put your back to a wall and keep knocking them down with Handgun shots.

When knife-fighting dogs, you must hit one right as it pounces at you. There's a peculiar timing to knife-fighting dogs that is difficult to master.

ZOMBIE

The humble zombie comes in four flavours: standard, sleeper, crawler, and "naked."

A **standard zombie** is best dealt with at long range with a Handgun. In Rebirth Mode, you have a chance of killing a zombie instantly with Handgun fire. Once it goes down, look for the spreading pool of blood.



Otherwise, stab it to death while it's prone.

A **sleeper zombie** looks dead, but is only faking, and will glom onto your character's foot if you step on its head. Stabbing or shooting it, if it doesn't kill it, will turn the zombie into a crawler. Your character will autotarget sleeper zombies, but not dead zombies.

A **crawler zombie** is an undead land mine, as with sleeper zombies. Run around behind it, if possible, and stab it to death before it can turn around. Otherwise, shoot to kill.

Finally, **"naked" zombies** are the skinless, more powerful versions found in the Underground and Laboratory. These do a lot more damage than their weaker companions, but are otherwise identical.

When knife-fighting zombies, keep them off-balance by slashing at their chests, preventing them from attacking. If one goes for a "puke" attack, the only way to interrupt it is to knock it down before it finishes. To instakill a zombie, wait for it to try to bite you and stab right before its mouth closes.



△ "Uuhh, well mom, it's a shed... Yes, it's very spacious. No, there's no zombies..."



△ Chris knew he'd have to pull some crazy moves if he was gonna win the dance-off.

stylus until the song finishes, and prepare for a boss fight with… the giant snake.

Jill can simply wax it with five **Acid Rounds**; Chris will have to empty 12-14 **Magnum Rounds** into it before it dies.



AS JILL:
Barry will arrive at this point to give you the **Pass Code** file. If you want Jill's best ending, drop into the hole, then wait for him to bring a second rope. Whether you do or not, check the tombstone, then rapidly hit the blue dots with your stylus to open a secret door.

AS CHRIS:
Check the tombstone, then rapidly hit the blue dots with your stylus to open a secret door.

THE FLAMETHROWER
Go round the corner to get the **Flamethrower** and a box of **Shotgun Shells**. You'll need to use the **Flamethrower** as a "key" at the end of this hall, but there are two **Green Herbs** nearby as consolation prizes.

IN THE KITCHEN
In the mansion's kitchen, Chris will find a **Small Key**. After finding this, use the kitchen's elevator to reach the second floor. Up here you'll find a **Green Herb** in the hall and the **Battery** in the closet, alongside two cases of **Explosive Rounds** (as Jill)/**Shotgun Shells** (as Chris).

You can find a short hall west of this area that leads back to the hall above the infirmary, but only Jill can unlock that door, and she can only do it from the other side. Visit here for the **Green** and **Blue Herbs**, then backtrack to the elevator hall and open the double doors to find the west library.

THE WEST LIBRARY
Open the locked desk for another load of **Magnum Rounds**, then read your way through the **Scrapbook**. You can wiggle the sword out of the door here and find **Handgun Bullets** within, but it's skippable.

Instead, go west. Hit the switch on the bust on the wall to turn on a spotlight, then push the statue into its beam to open a secret room. Check the desk for **Eric's Letter** (or an **MO Disk** in Classic Mode).

Dodge past the newly-arrived and somewhat aggresssive Chimerae and ride the elevator back down to the kitchen. Use its side door to return to the 1F west hall, and from there, head into the garden. You must now go back to the guardhouse and the room where you fought Plant 42… for a knife-only (yes, knife-only) showdown with the giant snake.

SLASHER SNAKE FIGHT
This may be the greatest challenge in Rebirth Mode. You can do mild damage to the snake when its mouth is open, but that's pretty mild. To really hurt it, you'll have to counter its long lunges. When its head goes back, slash at its soft underbelly. Once you have the timing down properly, you should cancel its lunge and do big damage to the Yawn.

Nine or ten countered lunges should kill it, and let you take the **Doom Book I** off the floor. Check the **Doom Book** in your inventory screen and rotate it; you'll be able to open it and find the **Eagle Medal**.

INTO THE UNDERGROUND
Return to the garden and install the **Battery** in the deactivated lift. Ride it up and use your **Crank** to refill the waterway, then ride the lift back down. You can now enter the Underground. Take a right at the base of the ladder.

AS JILL:
You'll run into Barry again. To get the best ending, go first, and allow him to cover you. He'll knock out a Hunter or two for you.

AS CHRIS:
Don't take the **Flamethrower** here. Doing so locks the nearby door, and you don't want to have to futz with it on your way back, as you're dodging Chimerae.

ENRICO MARINI
Leave via either eastern door. Check the generator room for a **First Aid Spray** and **Explosive Rounds** (Jill)/**Shotgun Shells** (Chris), then go south to meet with the unlucky Enrico Marini. Search him for **Handgun Bullets**, then pursue the gunman. You'll find a new and different **Crank** on the floor.

Go back to the base of the ladder and round the corner. Use your new **Crank** to rotate the passage so you can pass.

AS CHRIS:
Once you've rotated the passageway, take the **Flamethrowers** off the wall and use them to save a bit of ammo. You'll need to use them as "keys" to open the doors you pass by.

BEHIND THE BOULDER
Approach the boulder, then run back the other way and duck into the doorway. It'll smash the wall and allow you to move on, but check where it was to find **Flame Rounds** (Jill)/ **Magnum Rounds** (Chris).

SPIDER BOSS FIGHT
The next door leads to a boss fight. Run around the giant spider to dodge its venom blasts, then hit it from the side with a single **Shotgun** blast or **Flame Round**. Upon its death, leave the room to avoid its baby spiders, then reenter and use your **knife** or **Flamethrower** to clear the webbing off the door.

The path branches here. Go east for a safe room, which contains a **First Aid Spray** and **Blue Herb**. Go west to find a lift and another boulder trap. Trip it off, as you did last time, and you'll find the second **MO Disk** where it was.



HEX-SHAPED HOLE
Further on, there's a part of the floor in the boulder's path that looks different. Check the wall nearby for a hex-shaped hole, then use the **Crank** to rotate the passageway and reveal a secret door.

Enter, then push the statue just to the right of the hex-shaped hole. Crank it up to push the statue out, then retract the wall and push the statue onto the pressure plate. You'll reveal the **Doom Book II**; open it to find the **Wolf Medal**.

Ride the lift up, and put the **Medals** on either side of the fountain. Grab the **Green** and **Red Herbs**, then ride the lift down to find the Laboratory: the final stage.

TO THE LABORATORY
The door on B1 won't open 'til much later. Go down the ladder, then cross the safe room to the stairwell. The third

RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE

Win, win, win… get those snakes and dog-type things

RESCUING YOUR TEAMMATE

Either Chris or Jill is being held captive in a cell on the west side of Laboratory B3. You can open the door to their cellblock by finding three special codes. To get them, you must first find the three **MO Disks** in the mansion, the underground, and the laboratory, and use them on the three disc **decoders** scattered throughout the Laboratory B3.

If you don't care about rescuing Chris or Jill, go to the power room.

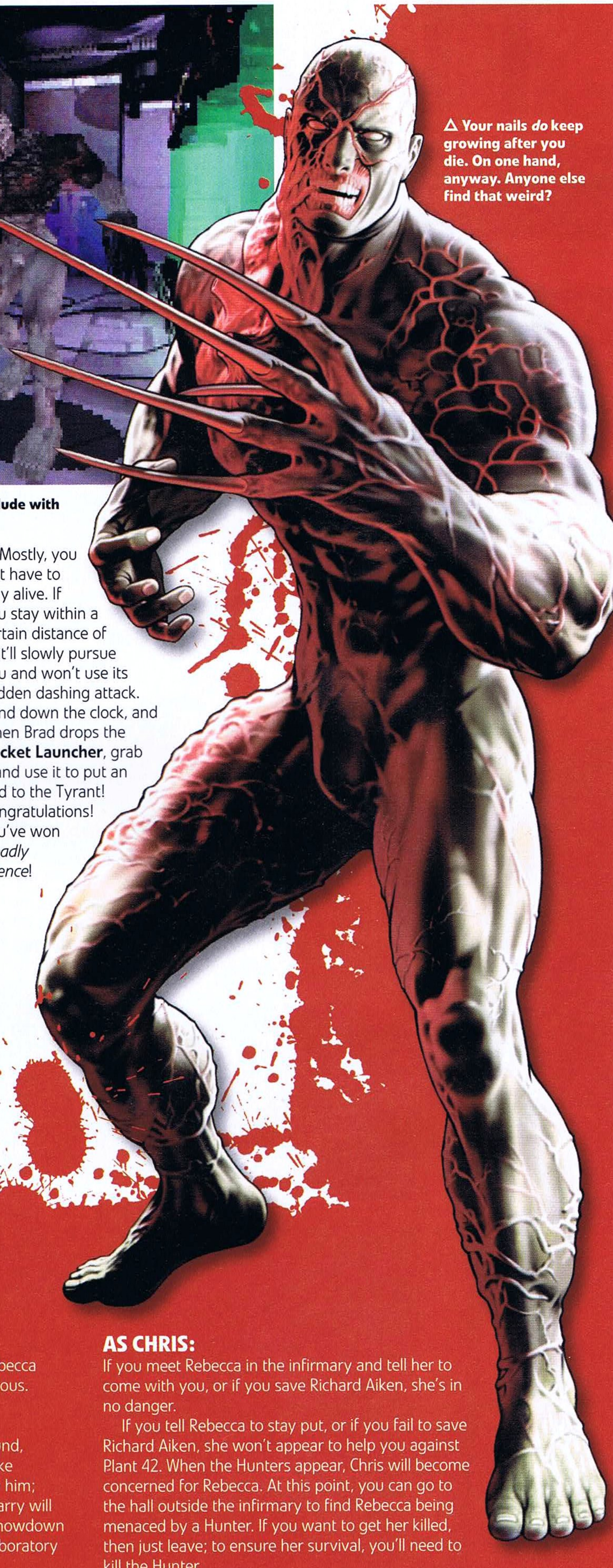
If you do care, visit the OR via the door near the final safe room. Take the **Shotgun Shells** and **Red Herb**. Push the crates over the gas valves on the floor. Now move the stepladder underneath the air vent to reach the morgue. Watch out for the sleeper zombies, take the **Magnum Rounds** off the shelf, and use the decoder.

Leave, then go to the study next to the cellblock. The decoder's on the desk; you can also get three bullseyes on the dartboard to open a compartment containing the **Fax** and **Magnum Rounds**.

Finally, the last decoder is in the maze leading up to the power room, directly ahead of you as you come through the second door.



△ **"You know, you're really pretty cocky for a dude with no pants to speak of."**



△ **Your nails *do* keep growing after you die. On one hand, anyway. Anyone else find that weird?**

MO Disk is on the desk outside the locked Visual Data Room.

Go downstairs and hang a right (your left). The first door on the left contains the **Researcher's Letter** and **Handgun Bullets**. Turn on the lights, push the bookcase and hit the switch to decode the letters on the painting

Leave that room and this hall, then go east and into the northern room. Take the **Slides**, then use the computer. Log in as JOHN with the password ADA, then unlock the doors on B3. You'll need the password MOLE to unlock the Visual Data Room on B2.

Go back upstairs and into that very room. Use the **Slides** on the projector for an ominous slideshow, and take the **Security System** file from the corner bookcase.

Check the panel on the wall by the screen for a puzzle. If you're playing as Jill, hit the buttons in the following order: #4, #3, #1, #5, and #2. If you're Chris, hit #2, #5, #4, #1, then #3. You'll reveal the **Lab Key**.

This opens the eastern door on B3. Directly across from it is the final safe room, containing a **Green Herb**, a **Blue Herb**, and **Flame Rounds** (Jill)/ **Magnum Rounds** (Chris).

IN THE POWER ROOM

In the power room, take a right as you enter and use the power computer. Draw a line between two conduits to place a circuit.

As Jill, place the circuits at the bottom between 6 and 8, and at the bottom between 7 and 5; as Chris, place them at the bottom between 7 and 5, and at the top between 1 and 2.

Make your way to the generator room and use the computer on the side. Place the circuits at the bottom between 1 and 7, and at the bottom between 8 and 5 to reactivate the final lift. Return to the hall outside the safe room, then hit the switch next to the lift to turn it back on. Ride it down.

Whatever happens next, you'll have to contend with the Tyrant. Fortunately, it's slow. Run away from it and plug it with six Magnum rounds to knock it out. Chris will now have to open the door with the computer console.

FACING THE TYRANT

Leave it, go rescue your teammate if you desire, and return to B1. The door is now unlocked. Grab a full load of **healing items** and your **Magnum**, then head through the door and down the tunnel. Take the **Battery** and install it to power the lift, then ride it up to the helipad.

Take the **Flare** and use it in the center of the LZ to get Brad's attention. If Barry or Rebecca is still alive, you'll now have to face the Tyrant for a final time.

Mostly, you just have to stay alive. If you stay within a certain distance of it, it'll slowly pursue you and won't use its sudden dashing attack. Wind down the clock, and when Brad drops the **Rocket Launcher**, grab it and use it to put an end to the Tyrant! Congratulations! You've won *Deadly Silence*!

ENDINGS FOR THE OTHERS

Your actions determine whether Barry or Rebecca survive the game, although it's not that obvious.

AS JILL:

When you encounter Barry in the underground, either refuse to go with him or tell him to take the lead. If you want him to die, don't follow him; instead, go and talk to Enrico. Afterwards, Barry will be gone, and later in the game, after your showdown with the Tyrant, you'll find Barry dying in Laboratory B2. He'll give you **Barry's Photograph**.

AS CHRIS:

If you meet Rebecca in the infirmary and tell her to come with you, or if you save Richard Aiken, she's in no danger.

If you tell Rebecca to stay put, or if you fail to save Richard Aiken, she won't appear to help you against Plant 42. When the Hunters appear, Chris will become concerned for Rebecca. At this point, you can go to the hall outside the infirmary to find Rebecca being menaced by a Hunter. If you want to get her killed, then just leave; to ensure her survival, you'll need to kill the Hunter.

TIMEWARP

With Mark Green

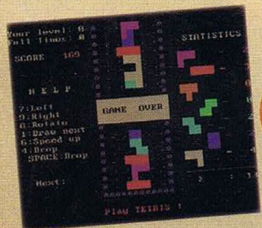


THE FAMILY TREE

The sordid history of today's biggest games

A Tetris Tryst

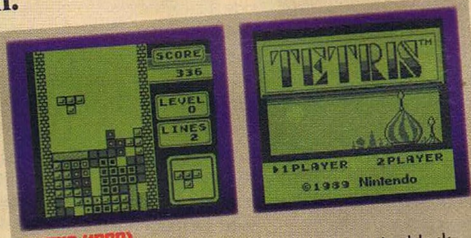
***Tetris DS* is getting everyone excited about bricks again. History here. Learn.**



TETRIS (1985)
Created in two weeks by engineer Alexey Pazhitnov. So popular in offices that bosses destroyed discs.



TENGEN TETRIS (1989)
Original NES *Tetris* made by *Asteroids*' creator. Withdrawn after 32 days by new license-holders Nintendo.

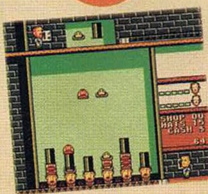


TETRIS (1989)
The definitive *Tetris*: 40 million sold, and the black-and-white obsession that made the Game Boy an international smash. The music was later turned into a top 10 chart smash by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Yup.



THE NEW TETRIS (1999)
Vying with the original GB version for title of 'Best *Tetris*', this N64 beauty was probably the first half-decent home version of the block-tumbler we'd seen since the NES days. No distracting backgrounds, no needless 'variations', no attempt to graft a story on (THQ, we're looking at you) – just pure brick-rotating pleasure (or pain, depending on if you were waiting for the long one).

In addition to a strange but compelling reward system that involved unlocking 'Wonders' like the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, *The New Tetris* brought one of the slap-yourself-in-the-face obvious ideas to the series: a little 'well' for storing bricks in. Rather than having to shoehorn the thin yellow fella in somewhere it wasn't welcome, you could store it and bring it out when it was Tetris Time. We haven't experienced so much coloured brick-related fun since some Blue Peter presenter knocked the head off a Lego model of a human being in 1985.



HATRIS (1989)
Pazhitnov's preposterous hat-based puzzle flop that we'll never stop laughing at.



TETRIS JR (1989)
The fabled 'final' game in Nintendo's series of Game & Watch handhelds. It was never released.



HOT POTATO! (2001)
Matching cart-riding potatoes, made by Pazhitnov's mate.



TETRISPHERE (1997)
Also, this: originally called 'Phear', bought by Nintendo to show off N64's 3D skillz.

Gaming Family Trees, A Definitive Guide 1017

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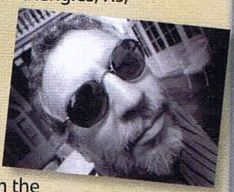
BE) , we could king that the essing a bowl dog itself.

RETRO NEWS

News rounded up from the world of retrogaming

NOLAN SPEAKS

When news is accompanied by a picture of a bearded man smoking a pipe in a jacuzzi, you tend to shift your eyes elsewhere. Which explains why we missed the fact that bearded, pipe-smoking, jacuzzi-floating Nolan 'father of videogames' Bushnell praised the Revolution controller back in December. "The 3D controller that Nintendo is on to is a very good idea," said the *Pong* man and founder of Atari. "Today's controllers with triangles, Xs, squares and circles – it's scary. Complexity lost the casual gamer." You won't be able to use it in the jacuzzi, Nolan.



STRIPPED BARE

Life Meter (**lifemetercomics.com**) is a collection of game-related comic strips that's dripping in delicious retro batter. We know: most online game comics are funny like a fly in your eyeball. But one look at the KC Green's 'Frog Suit' strip – we won't ruin the joke, but you'll never feel so sorry for a Goomba – had us hooked. Plus, there's a mildly rude picture of Princess Ruto from *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* that's just the thing for those of us who like girls with gills, fins and the skin texture of a walrus. Sorry, we meant those of *you*.



RETRO LOVE

Here in magazine land, Valentine's Day has only just been and gone. And it proved the perfect excuse for some rather 'special' people to design cards – cards made especially for folk who reckon videogaming is the perfect medium through which to express the power of love. This one really appealed to our cold, retro-focused hearts: cleverly taking ye olde Game Boy *Tetris* and mixing it with a cleverer idea and an even clevererer slogan. You're expecting a joke about "the long one", but you're not going to get it.



NET TENDO

N64 EXPLODED



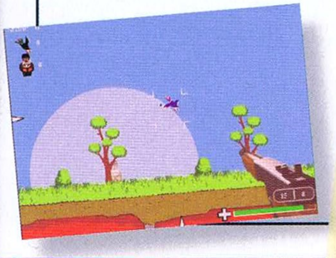
Asked to 'reverse engineer' a product for a class, internet citizen 'Cole' looked slyly out the corner of his eye at the N64 controller cowering in the shadows. Next thing you know, the poor joypads's been unscrewed, gutted and hung on wires just like those Gunther von Hagens corpse exhibitions. The resulting piece of plastic art has clocked up 20,000 views from fascinating geriatrics like us. And, as one site visitor pointed out, it's "possibly the best method ever for getting rid of the dreaded 'grey stuff'." Brrr – we feel dirty just thinking about it.

- **http://cmr8286.deviantart.com/**

DUCK HUNT 1945

"What would you get if you mix *Call of Duty* with *Duck Hunt*?" asks a man called 'von Pluggeleburg'. It's a rhetorical question, because he's answered it himself using the combined powers of brain, fingers, code and internet. *Duck Hunt 1945* is an online game five months in development, with the 'innocent' duck-blasting of Nintendo's '84 original transformed into a harrowing WWII-era shooting gallery of machineguns, bunkers and dogs in jackets taking potshots at you from behind bushes. Realistic? 'Survival Mode' took five seconds to kill us off – about twice as long as we'd have lasted in the trenches.

- **www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/290917**



FIVE OLD LOGOS

Five of the least inspiring logos ever to be swept under the carpet



NINTENDO

As seen on the '60s Nintendo lego we featured a few months back, Nintendo preferred the in-your-face attitude of the rhombus to the subtle loveliness of the 'racetrack' in the old days. Didn't help them sell any more lego, though.



ATARI

Atari isn't the *original* Atari, of course. It's Infogrames – the company that chose an armadillo as its logo, and then tried to make people forget by turning the poor thing into a floating spring. That's the French for you.



KONAMI

Someone took the slightly violent image of 'kicking K' too seriously – this one's giving a rude hand gesture, too. Konami has since decided that nothing says 'dynamic' and 'resourceful' like grey text with a slight rightwards slant.



EA

Back before they were brutally acronymed by marketing types, back when an EA game wouldn't be allowed out of the building until it had innovation seeping out of its every pore – Electronic Arts put their faith in the power of geometry.



ACCLAIM

Yes, we really miss the days of *BMX XXX, Legends of Wrestling* and *Turok Evolution.*

RETRO TAT

Sounds like teen spirit

Popping out of a vending machine in a toyshop near you (or, if you don't live in Japan, a toyshop 5,940 miles away) are these 'gashapon', or 'capsule toys', that ring out loud and clear with the sound of 20-year-old Mario history. Show your devotion to the cult of Nintendo by activating the 'JUMP' noise over and over again on the tube, or driving your mum to tears by making it sound like Mario's sliding down a pipe every time she blinks.

- **redruth.greenbean.org/~ben/4CR/smb_super_synth.swf**
- **www.jbox.com/PRODUCT/TKSG039**



WRITE IN!

Have you found something that's turned old Nintendo stuff into highly desirable retro oddities? Tell us and we'll name and shame it in these very pages. Email ngc@futurenet.co.uk

THIS MONTH IN NINTENDO

This month, six years ago – **N64 Magazine, April 2000**







△ We invented 76 new swear words while trying to unlock all the cars.

△ 'Tail-light blur' was all the rage back in our day, kids. At least until someone decided – rightly – that it looks rubbish.



GAME OF THE MONTH
RIDGE RACER 64
NINTENDO 64

Even if it was a little late to the party, it's well worth a look if only for the expertly ludicrous steering…

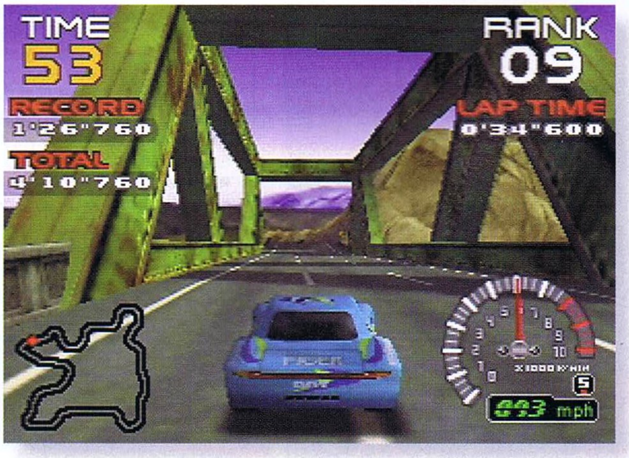
WHAT'S THIS? Unexpectedly brilliant N64 remake of a seminal PlayStation racer, and one of Namco's first games for the Nintendo 64.

THE BIG DEAL: Prior to April, not much. NSTC, Nintendo's new US games outfit, was unproven, and a demo we'd played a few months before suggested it might handle like a bison with a broken shin. It wasn't until we got our hands on what was essentially a fancied-up version of a four-year-old game that it hit us: *Ridge Racer 64* was 'wicked on the decks'. Just three tracks (divided into sub-circuits), but the speed and slickness was astonishing. And the patented *Ridge Racer* handling – ie at top speed you actually had to turn *the wrong way* to make the corners – was expertly recreated.

FROM THE SAME TEAM AS: Eventually, *Wave Race Blue Storm* and *1080 Avalanche*. But, at the time, NSTC was as new as a freshly-popped bairn.

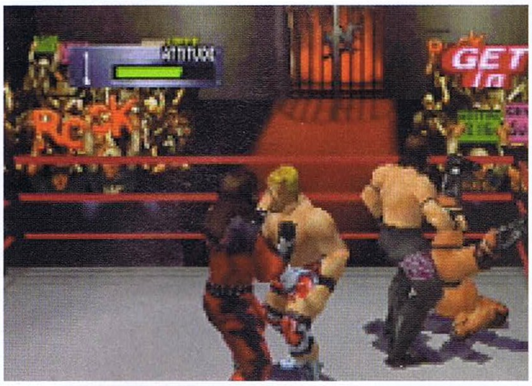
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT: Well, Nintendo unveiled Gamecube just half a year later, and bringing such a wizened old racer to the N64 wasn't ever likely to make the 6 o'clock news. Second-hand Amazon rating: five of your quids.

AND: Nintendo's Peter Main announced *Ridge Racer 64* with the words "N64 owners have been waiting for a fast-paced, arcade racer." Brave of him, seeing as it was three years after the machine launched.



Everyone was playing…

WWF WRESTLEMANIA 2000 N64



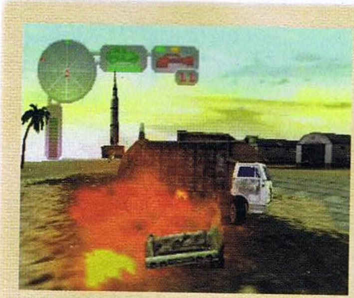
△ The visuals were iffy, but the fights packed a real punch. See?



△ Someone's decided the 'squared circle' is just right for a nap.

Whether you wanted to look like The Rock, or create a character that looked like your gran, this game had it all…

The first 'rassler from THQ after they nabbed the WWF (ie WWE) licence from Acclaim, *WWF Wrestlemania 2000* racked up 90% from us – mostly on account of an astonishing Create-A-Wrestler mode that had us birthing blubber-bellied fighting freaks and stick-thin underwear fetishists until we dehydrated from tears of laughter. With a full line-up of now forgotten wrestlers like Mr Ass, "Pretty Boy" Pat Patterson and "Meat", and a customisable Pay-Per-View mode that gave you all the powers of a TV scheduling supergod, this one's still remembered in fond daydream-clouds by fans of colliding money-muscle. You won't find a better People's Eyebrow anywhere…



OTHER REVIEWS THIS MONTH

Battlezone 64
Shooting plus strategy, lent by the big PC library. Flawed, ugly, but passable.
73%

Cybertiger Woods Golf
Tongue-in-cheek fairway play with an ill-advised 'virtual club' feature.
72%

Vigilante 8: Second Offence
Dull follow-up to a promising vehicle-battering original. "Average".
61%

Worst game…

DISNEY'S TARZAN NINTENDO 64





"Plays like it was designed by someone who has never experienced a Mario game in his life," sighed Kittsy as he dragged the yodelling vinemaster along tediously generic 2D jungle paths. It wasn't a surprise to see a Disney game mixed with the same ingredients as every other title they'd ever released – what *was* odd was the fact that the 'lord of the jungle' was repeatedly bitten and stamped on by raccoons, frogs and monkeys. Surfing trees and collecting coins was dull, dull, dull: but there was at least "a lizard that Andrea was particularly fond of". 35%. Gah.

Other news…

Old news, tastefully repackaged…



GO BOY

Game Boy Advance was still just a name. But Nintendo's Peter Main was already barking about selling one million of them on launch day – while Europe's automo-marketeer David Gosen claimed they'd be putting the release date off to give Game Boy Color room to breathe. Nice bit of left hand, right hand.

WHAT A DDIN

We finally got our hands on the oft-delayed and inevitably doomed 64DD – a clunky bolt-on disc drive for the N64 that played games like *Doshin the Giant* and *Mario Artist*. We can still remember taking it home and hearing it boot up a disc. "That must be what hell sounds like," we jabbered afterwards.



EYE SPY

Crazy-delicious news of the month was the discovery of button codes in *GoldenEye 007* – three years after the game's launch. Suddenly, you didn't have to spend half a lifetime completing the Facility in 2'05" to unlock Invincibility – all thanks to the mysterious 'Dr Ian'. Not a medical doctor, we're told.

NGC CLASSICS

Bring back the memories – or fill in the brainholes with new ones

CLASSIC BOXART

TAGIN' DRAGON : NES (1989)



We tapped 'worst+boxart' into Google this month, in the interests of subjectivity (and not, let's make this very clear, laziness). And here's what came out: a box we'd never seen before, but which we've now got trapped in our brains forever. Thanks, internet pipes! It's easy to hate Tagin' Dragon for his somehow arrogant way of feasting on another dragon's tail – but once you've focused your eyes on his unnervingly masculine uber-pecs, and started wondering what's going on with his left 'paw', you'll be hooked. 20 levels? We'll pass.

CLASSIC CUTSCENE

RESIDENT EVIL 2 : N64 (1999)

Getting full-motion video to stream off a Nintendo cart was so tricksy, several Capcom executives were burned at the stake as witches. Their sacrifice was not in vain. Resi 2's intro is a classic: the debut appearance of boyband wannabe Leon S Kennedy, the requisite 'acting', and a fuel tanker going up in flames like an exploding sun. A bit blurry on N64, but Resi through and through.



CLASSIC COCK-UP

GOLDENEYE 007 NINTENDO 64 (1997)

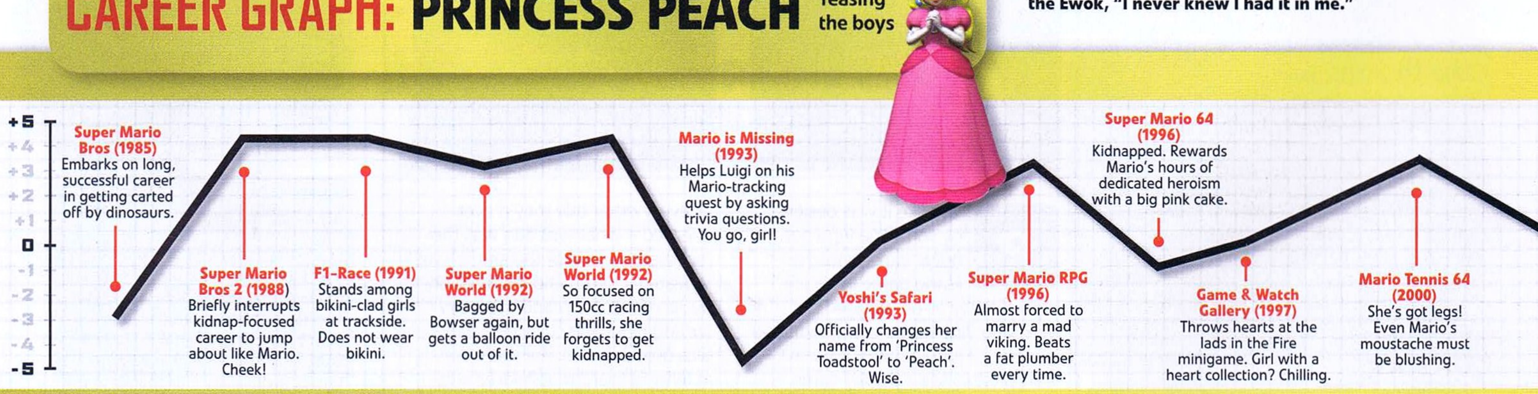
Zoom in with the sniper and the guards float, zoom in with the sniper and the guards float, zoom in with the sniper and… We received so many envelopes containing this tip back in the N64 days that we had to put a small note in one issue requesting you lot to *please make it stop*. Not that we were surprised you liked it: in a sparklingly realistic game like *GoldenEye 007*, it was a giggle to see Russian guards floating around like they'd just swallowed a helium balloon. And how did you achieve such an effect? Yes, you zoomed in with the sniper rifle.



△ **"Oh, gosh," said new GoldenEye character C-3PO to the Ewok, "I never knew I had it in me."**

CAREER GRAPH: PRINCESS PEACH

Teasing the boys

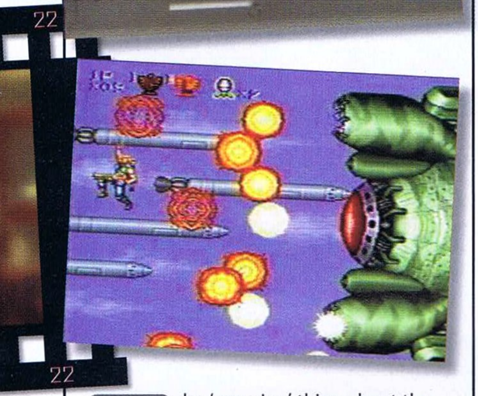


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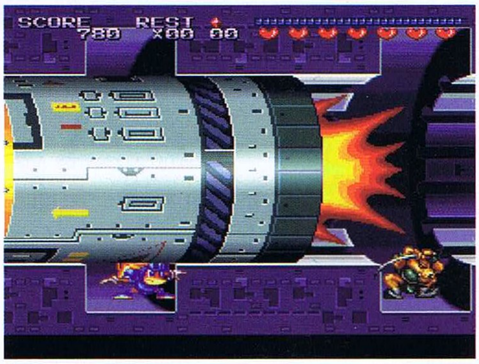
CLASSIC BOSS

SUPER PROBOTECTOR: SNES (1992)





The 'amusing' thing about the Airbus that rounded off level four of *Super Probotector* was that it was the game's *tenth* boss, simply because Konami hated your guts. The bloated, floating sky fortress of evil was memorable not so much for its behaviour (being evil, and floating), but for the way you killed it: *hanging from a missile to fly over to it*, and then standing on volatile exploding rockets while pelting it with hate. Robots are such showoffs.





△ As fast as Sonic and three times the 'attitude'. Best. Oppossum. Ever.



CLASSIC LEVEL

SPARKSTER

SUPER NINTENDO 64 (1994)

Poor Sparkster. Konami clearly intended for their little marsupial ("Feel the oppower of the oppossum") to out-Sonic the blue one himself. But, he'll mainly be remembered for contributing to some of some of the silliest names in videogame legend. Planet Eginasem? A spaceship called The Pig Star? Generalissimo Lioness – an evil lion leading an army of wolves? Good grief.

We always had a soft spot for Sparkster, though, especially the last level. Arriving after your brain had already been battered into submission by a robot chicken as big a tree, it was electrifying for three big reasons: 1) spinning screen-high missiles that pushed the SNES so hard its screws popped out; 2) enemies who lost their armour and scampered off in their undies; 3) a vertical-shaped battle with a speedy mechanometalomonster – one of many hints that Konami had been drinking the same tapwater as the people behind *Gunstar Heroes*.

In fact, *Sparkster* wasn't shy about brazenly copycatting its peers. Take the halfway boss: a giant brain in a bottle that might as well have had "Copyright 1994 *Metroid*" stamped on its fleshy bits. Still – when you're looking at a game helmed by *Contra/Probotector* godfather Nobuya Nakazato, you don't diss it. And especially when it stars "the baddest oppossum ever to strap on a rocket pack".

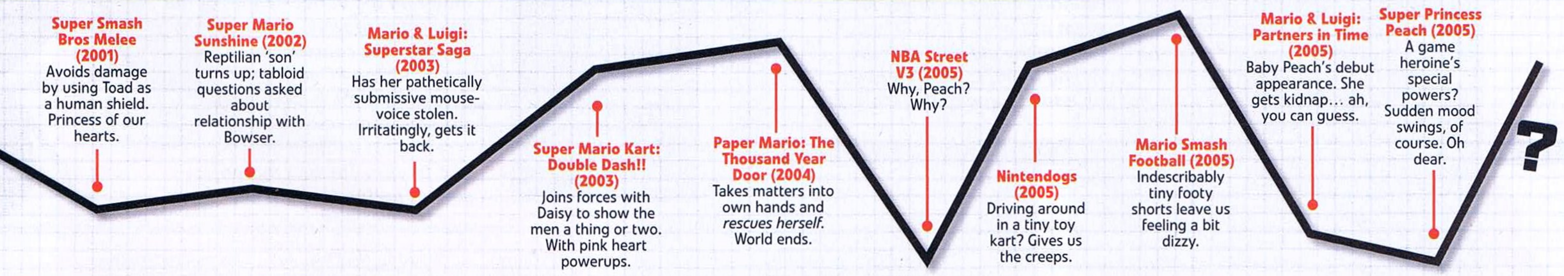


LOST CLASSIC

COLOR TV GAME 6 (1977)

Another Revolution mockup? Guess again, folks. The *Color TV Game 6* is one of five Nintendo gameboxes that predates the NES by anything up to seven whole man-years – but the average collector is more likely to have a talking giraffe in their attic than one of these. Built with the help of Mitsubishi, it lit up your wood-panelled '70s TV with six variations on 'Light Tennis' (read: *Pong*), all coded up by Nintendo R&D1 – the team that hired a fella named Shigeru Miyamoto the very same year. Followed by the *TV Game 15* and, suddenly, the *TV Game 112*. That's progress.





CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!
Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us at…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your name and address so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

STAR LETTER
If you send us the best letter of the month, you'll receive a shiny new Gamecube (or GBA/DS) game from our bulging sack of shiny new games. Lovely.

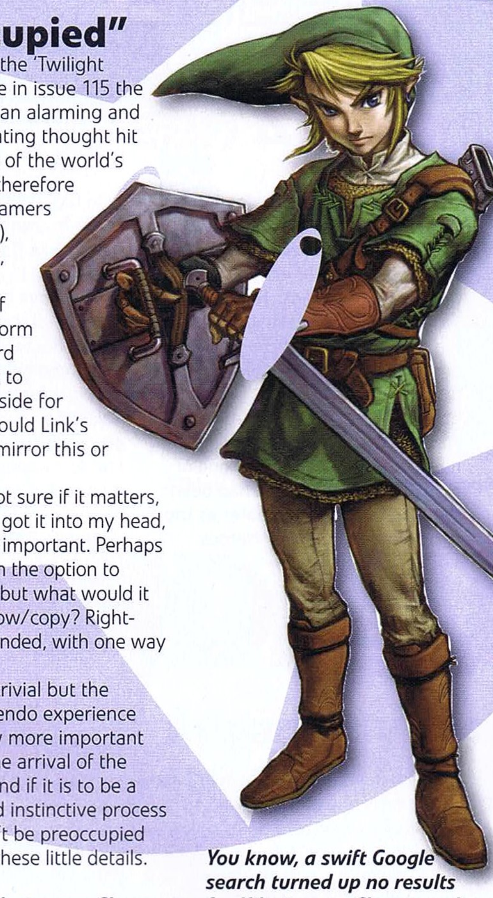


"Preoccupied"
I was re-reading the 'Twilight Revolution' article in issue 115 the other day, when an alarming and ultimately frustrating thought hit me. The majority of the world's population, and therefore the majority of gamers (including myself), are right-handed, whereas Link is left-handed. So, if you were to perform a horizontal sword stroke from right to left (inside to outside for right-handers) would Link's onscreen action mirror this or follow it?

I'm honestly not sure if it matters, but now that I've got it into my head, I'm convinced it's important. Perhaps we could be given the option to choose a setting, but what would it be? Mirror or follow/copy? Right-handed or left-handed, with one way to set to it?

It may sound trivial but the heart of the Nintendo experience is gameplay, now more important than ever with the arrival of the new controller. And if it is to be a truly intuitive and instinctive process then we shouldn't be preoccupied or distracted by these little details. But I am.

Henry Bailey, Hilcot-upon-Cheese



You know, a swift Google search turned up no results for Hilcot-upon-Cheese, so I suspect you're either a) fictional, or b) fibbing. But anyway. We're sure that this is something Nintendo have got covered. Nevertheless, I'm left-handed, and had a quick right-handed wave around of the telly remote yesterday, imagining I was taunting Cuckos, and it didn't seem as hard as trying to pen calligraphy in Latin with the wrong hand. It shouldn't be as big an issue as you might think. Ed



Bonus Letters

What's green and white with a big nose? Yoshi.
Chris Lee, Hockley
That's so bad it's not even going in Grintendo. Sorry. Ed

I just thought I'd share my joy.
Loyal Reader Arron
That's some good joy, son. Ed

You probably think that I am going on, saying what everyone else knows, but I am a Nintendo Fan and it can't be helped.
Daniel Leigh, Jersey
Welcome to the club. Ed

Or maybe it handles like a flying pig!
Henry Tsang, email
The best kind of pig, that. Ed

I'm not sure if I need anything to make it work on my Gamecube.
Simon Clark, email
Neither are we. Ed

He will keep trying to start his chainsaw up.
Lee Emmot, email
He's a plucky fella. Ed

Hey, who is Ed? He keeps anwering your letters and junk and I can't figure out who he is! And I really wanna know!
Tom Charles, email
Weren't people asking us this in the early days of N64 Magazine? Sheesh. Ed

I noticed all of this while sitting on the loo reading your mag, I'm even going to be late going to my girlfriend's because I sent this email.
Warren Simmons, Great Yarmouth
Words fail us. Ed



"Beckons"
I know you don't award Star Performances any more, but I was wondering if I could get an honorary one? I recently finished all cups on all difficulties, with all characters on *F-Zero X* on the N64 – that's 3,600 races or 10,800 laps, or… that's enough detail, you get the picture (I've only been playing it since May 2000!). You'll have to excuse me now, *GX* beckons…

Robin Bradley, Basingstoke

Now that's value for money. Readers! Robin Bradley is hereby awarded our Insane Retro Gamer Star Performance award, which we've only ever given out once, that time being right now. Do write back and let us know when you crack GX. In about five years, we reckon… Ed

"Plug"
Hey, how do you take the screenshots of GBA/GC games anyway? Do you plug something into it and the computer… and if possible where do you buy it? Just wondering.

Ryan Dow, the electronic interweb

Every month Nintendo sends us a spangly, sparkly bag of Magic Ninty Dust. All we do is sprinkle it onto the Gamecube, GBA or DS and sing, en masse, in a high-pitched trill, "fin fang foom!" and screenshots immediately appear, literally as if by magic, in the various pages of our beloved magazine. Alternatively, we hook the consoles up to our grabbing PC and, via Future Publishing-developed software, can take screenshots with the touch of a button. The first option sounds better, though. Ed



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
We do like our letters – it's good to know that you're loving the games like the big man (Shigsy) intended. A big thanks to everyone who wrote or emailed in to us this month, including (but not limited to): Alex Olney, via email; Lee Emmot, Leeds; Stephne O' Brien, Dublin; Elliot Milbourn, Scot-A-Land; Dominic Egan, Essex; Todd Marsh, Gloucestershire; Seb Sharpe, Shropshire; Claire Connelly, Wishaw; Tom Tommy, London; Alex Catena, Aylesbury; David

"Major surgery"

Whilst reading about *Band Brothers* a little while ago I found out that there are (supposedly, anyway) expansion packs for it that have more tunes to add to the game and these are stored on GBA cartridges.

Sometime later when I was playing *Mario Kart DS* whilst recovering from major surgery in hospital over Christmas (fun!) it occurred to me that the same idea could be applied to this game. Nintendo could make the *Mario Kart* experience last so much longer by releasing an expansion pack which, for instance, could add new missions, more unlockable characters and of course more retro tracks.

Some of the tracks chosen by Nintendo were admitedly quite poor choices (Frappe Snowland? More like Crappy Snowland) and I would love to be able to play tracks such as Wario Stadium, SNES Rainbow Road and the GBA's Ribbon Road online against other people. Characters could include Magikoopa (as he was sadly chucked out of *MK64*), Koopa Troopa and maybe even DK Jr. We already know that GBA carts can store large amounts of data so it wouldn't really be a problem, I imagine, fitting four more cups worth of retro tracks, a couple of characters and an extra set of missions onto one. Nintendo really would be fools not to come up with some sort of expansion for it and I urge **NGC** to form some sort of petition to make this happen as soon as possible. Cheers muchly.

Alexander Davies, Llandeilo

That's a brilliant idea. Moo Moo Farm, Frappe Snowland and Choco Mountain weren't the best choice from MK64, were they? We'd love to be able to race online over Royal Raceway and Donkey Kong's Jungle Parkway. And what if the expansion also included upgrades for the online mode? More tracks and eight-player support... we can only dream. Or wait for the next* Mario Kart. *Ed



◁ "Let's-a-go, all the way to Holby City..."

Bonus Letters

Milk and orange juice actually complement each other perfectly when drunk in succession.
Stephen Clark, Surrey
Eurgh. Ed

The water was yellow and there was a floater brushing up against my face. It was disgusting.
Greg Cole, Watford
Charming. Ed

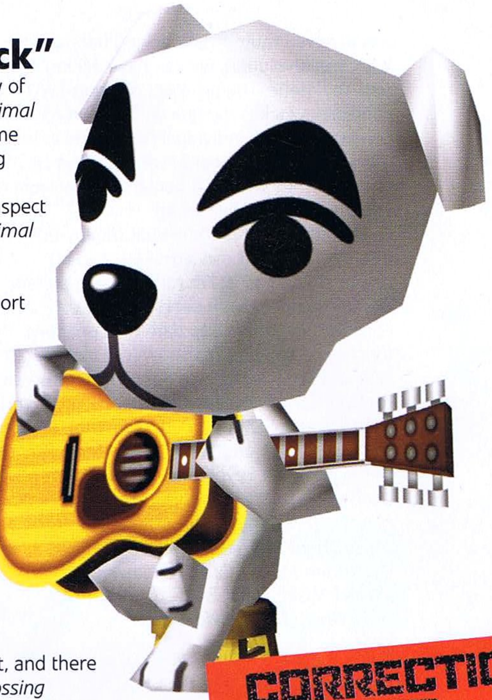
Madden 2004. We should call this sport soccer. Ya' know, just to be funny.
Arthur Plant, Greenock
Funny haha, or funny peculiar? Ed

Is it going to add to the pile in the corner of the room, alongside the microphone and bongos?
Elliot Kruszynski, Gloucester
Let's hope not. Ed

Please settle an argument I have been having with people online about the best course of action for the Revolution sequel to *Super Smash Bros.*
Martyn de Weert, Runcorn
Consider it settled. Ed

Hi my name is Ethan Lawless and I won a competition at nintendo.com.au
Ethan Lawless, Australia
Congratulations! You also win best name of the month (closely followed by Henry Tsang and Dan Peachey). Ed

"Internal clock"



After reading the first review of the Gamecube version of *Animal Crossing*, I knew it was a game that I just had to play. Having played *Pokémon Silver* and enjoyed the real-time clock aspect of that game I knew that *Animal Crossing* would deliver.

However, I didn't buy it. I just knew that this was the sort of game that would take up a lot of my time, and also be the sort of game that would require me to play in short sessions, possibly several times a day. Having a full-time job and family, that wasn't an option, and neither was constantly changing the Gamecube's internal clock to try and rush through the game.

And then the DS came out, and there were rumours of *Animal Crossing* appearing on it, but I still didn't quite believe that the game would even make it to a European market, being so 'unique'. Well... after months and months of holding back from buying the Gamecube version, my copy of *Animal Crossing: Wild World* was delivered, just four days after it was released in the US.

I have played the game daily ever since and, needless to say, it is wonderful. A living, breathing, fun world in a DS game cart with characters that are mad as a hat and so, so much to do.

Waiting for a game to be released can be hard sometimes, especially for us Nintendo fans in the UK. But all those of you who are looking forward to *Animal Crossing: Wild World* to appear in March – I can tell you now, it will be worth waiting for. It's going to be one of the most fun and involving games you ever play, and a worthy reminder that the 'Nintendo Difference' is still very much alive...

Paul Harries, via electronic missive

Paul, you almost made us cry. Sniff. (But he's right, you know.* Animal Crossing: Wild World *is utterly splendid.) Ed

"Fairy boys"

I'd like to express how excited I am about this year! I honestly believe that this year will be a revival for Nintendo and gaming in general. There's so much buzz and excitement around Revolution! Seriously, people talk about 360 and PS3 and it's all specs and power. When I hear talk of Revolution, it always involves grinning, wavy arms and words about how fresh the concept is; how different it's going to be and how fun it will be to actually use the controller in the various ways mentioned!

I agree wholeheartedly! Don't get me wrong, I love my Cube and enjoy playing games through button/stick controls. Ever since I bought my DS however, my mind has opened up to new possibilities. Nearly every game I have ever played

▶

CORRECTION CORNER

You silly, silly people. You've given *Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance* 90% in the back of your magazine, whereas in issue 114 you gave it 91% at the end of the review. This is where you say how very silly you've been and beg for apology to Nintendo, Intelligent Systems and, of course, myself.
Alex Rose, Manchester

Sorry for the missing 1%, everyone. But sheesh! It could be worse. We could have got all the screenshots wrong in a* Mario Kart *feature, or something. Oh, hang on... Ed

Oh, and of course in your *Chrono Trigger* re-cap in issue 116 you've said you travel like a yo-yo between several timezones. I personally never remember travelling back and forth to the apocalypse. Y'know, you kinda really only go once or maybe twice.
Alex Rose, Manchester

You can stop now, Alex. Ed

Yarrow, Chipping Norton; Willem Serne, Netherlands; Luke Bowyer, Cheshire; Freddie Feilden, Beccles; Dylan McKay, via email; James Fellows, via email; Gordon Yeung, via email; Stephen McLean, Aberdeenshire; John Cox, via email; Ben Hooper, via email; David Hall, Crawley; Richard Murphy, Blackpool; William Harwood, via email; Jordan Black, via email; Richard, via email; Tony Pang, Kent; Jono Sourbut, via email; Jeremy Linares, via email; RinkyDink, Hyrule. Thanks folks! We will remember you when the revolution comes!

has involved thumbs and aching hands. Now, with the Revolution, we can have aching arms too! Yay! Hehe. The prospect of using TWO controllers makes me quiver. Dual sword combos, rowing, individual fist control in beat 'em ups... (haven't heard that one before!). Also, cricket games will get a boost. You'd be able to use the controller like a bat!

My other point is somewhat moany but also optimistic – it concerns Link and his recent shenanigans. I'm rather disappointed. the GC seems to have been his weakest console performance to date with only one (uncompleted) game to show (not including the N64 and SNES ports). I've been looking forward to *Twighlight Princess* for aaaaaages now and, to be honest, I almost cried when I read that I'd have to wait until 2006! I'm all for a release of the game on Revolution, but Nintendo have been asses to the fans this generation. Putting Mario in freaking everything seems to be a consolation. Well, it isn't! Still, at least we saw Link whup ass in *SC2* and *Smash Bros.* I WANT MORE FAIRY BOYS TO CONTROL!

Steve Collier, via email

Glad to see you're as enthusiastic as we are about Revolution, Steve (if perhaps a little too enthusiastic in places). As for Link and his appearances on the Gamecube, it's true that he hasn't had as brilliant a showing as he did on the N64 (as ace as it is,* Wind Waker *isn't as good as* Ocarina of Time *or* Majora's Mask*).* Twilight Princess*, however, will more than make up for his absences. Ed



△ Just how much weeping (joy/frustration) can one new console inspire?

"Seizures"

You know, I reckon Gunpei Yokoi had it right all along, he was just 11 years too early! What am I talking about? The Virtual Boy of course.

I know the system had its idiosyncrasies, but it worked, and worked well. Excuse the pun, but it opened up another dimension in the world of gaming. Some games, such as 3D *Tetris*, required the third dimension in order for the game to work. It allowed games never before dreamt of to be created. But unfortunately hardly anyone took up this challenge due to its obscurity.

Anyway, back to my point. What if Yokoi-San had conceived the Virtual Boy in the 21st century? I believe we would have had a completely different system on our hands.

LCD development has come along in leaps and bounds in the last decade – compare the Gameboy Colour to the DS for example. It would have allowed the Virtual Boy to have a full colour, high-resolution screen. No doubt the progression in technology would also mean that the system could have the same power as the DS or, dare I say it, the Gamecube. Imagine the delight of experiencing *Metroid* or *Mario Sunshine* in true 3D. Advances in engineering would also have allowed the system to be considerately smaller and lighter, allowing it to be worn as once intended and a wireless analogue controller would certainly not be out of the question. Of course the system would still be very power hungry, but rechargeable batteries would be able to help rectify that situation.



△ Virtual Boy meets virtual colour scheme in 1995 game *Wario Land*. Too soon, it was just too soon...

But, the issues of seizures and headaches still remains. Personally I have never experienced any problems, even when being irresponsible and ignoring the automatic pause. But perhaps a month's money-back guarantee in the event of side-effects could be imposed? Of course, this is true speculation, just the creation of my rose-tinted mind.

I hope I have given you food for thought. Gunpei Yokoi certainly was a man before his time, a true visionary.

Oliver Hale, via electric epistle

All good points, apart from the one about ignoring the automatic pause. I don't a think a month's money-back guarantee would be enough to get me to play something that might give me a seizure... Ed

"Old tat"

I want to react to a letter from issue 115 about new games on Revolution. It would be fantastic to see old franchises come to life again thanks to the new controller (I think of *Mario, Zelda, Metroid, Donkey Kong*, etc). But it would be

CREATIVE CORNER

This month's top arts and crafts masterpieces...

"Got trapped"

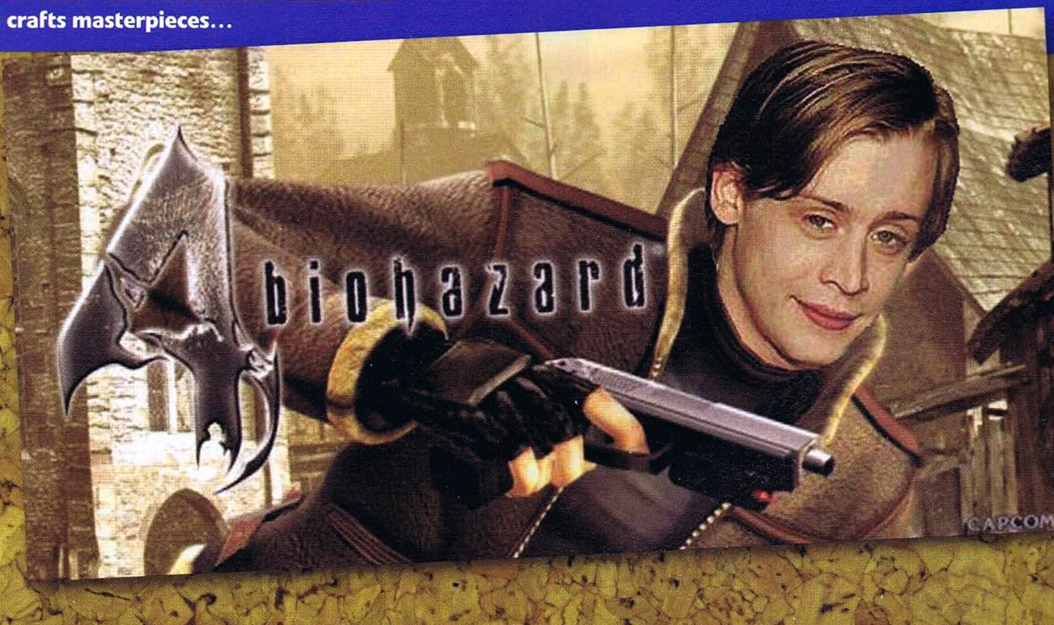
Has anyone ever stopped to think about what would happen to Leon if he didn't stop the eggs from hatching?

I did and believe me it isn't PRETTY (this photo got taken by a middle-aged villager who passed away shortly after taking it).

Rumour has it that this creature standing here before you, immortalised on film, is still lurking around in that crummy little village where Leon got trapped. This message should encourage you to successfully complete the game. If NOT, then this is what you will get (and – believe you me – no one wants or deserves that).

Willem Serne, the Netherlands

Would you believe that this was the best Creative Corner we got this month? Ed



very bad If we didn't get many new franchises as well. I also have a very bad feeling about the launch. I think that history is repeating itself. What do I mean? I mean the same launch games as Gamecube (well, sequels anyway). Shigsy has already said that he would love to make a sequel to *Luigi's Mansion*, and a new *Super Smash Brothers* is already announced. And what does that mean to many potential buyers? Don't buy Revolution because it is all old tat!
Henrie van Meurs, Holland

***I hardly think a new* Smash Bros *is going to be seen as old tat. However, lots of shiny new games would be a good thing indeed. We're hoping for* Kid Icarus *(sound of Shigsy weeping).* Ed**



△ **So beautiful... they should have sent... a poet.**

"Swirly hands"

I think it was the picture of the swirly hands that finally did it for me, but... the Micro, it's a wonderful, wonderful thing. And who would have thought it? Not me. A revamped version of a five-year-old console? Are you kidding?

But you know how it is, I had a £10 Game voucher burning a £70 hole in my pocket, and well... I have to say, it's the GBA as it always should have been.

I find myself as excited about it now as I was before the original GBA's launch five years ago. I know that sounds odd, but when you factor in the original's awful screen, the SP's washed out colours, and the DS's cheapo-finish, the Micro feels like a revelation.

A couple of extra plus points I hadn't realised before the voucher found its way home: the Micro's concave D-pad, so snug under the thumb, is far better than the DS's; and the machine even comes with its own plush drawstring bag. Sweet.
Paul Roscoe, Adlington

***Amen to that, Paul. It's lovely, isn't it?* Ed**

"Complete fools"

In issue 116's mailbox there's a letter headed 'Arguing', and the perpetrator says that *Resi 5* will be difficult to make on Revolution. Forgive me, but I reckon that of any console, Revolution would be the BEST for it, especially with the over the shoulder perspective.

Imagine clasping your controller in two hands, pointing nervously into the screen, or firing desparately with the trigger on the underside as enemies come ever closer. No other console will be able to do that with its standard controller. Capcom would show themselves to be complete fools if they didn't bring *Resi 5* to Revolution.
Luke Bowyer, Cheshire

***It would be an absolutely brilliant way to play* Resi*, we agree. Let's just hope that Capcom port it over to Revolution after it's released for PS3 and Xbox 360, eh?* Ed**

"Embarrassing"

How embarrassing. Issue 116 must've been the worst ever for errors. Allow me to name as many as I could find (make sure you have nothing planned for a few hours), mainly from the Top 10 *Mario Kart* tracks feature:

1) Instead of various Bowser's Castle 2 pictures, you've placed Bowser's Castle pictures from *Mario Kart 64*!

2) In reverse, for the Bowser's Castle N64, you've got pictures of Bowser's Castle 2! What's up with you people?

This is just nit-picking, but still: "as I approach the Whomps IN MY MIND" – they're actually Thwomps. Whomps are from Super Mario 64.

3) One of the pictures of Rainbow Road is from the Gamecube version. You're talking about the SNES version in the paragraph, one simple word. Eh? And I repeat. Eh?

4) Again, in reverse, the picture of Rainbow Road from the N64 *Mario Kart* is replaced with what I believe to be Rainbow Road from the SNES game. Wha? This also begs the simple question, why is there a picture of Rainbow Road (*Double Dash*) in there anyway?

5) In your review for *Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time*, in the "If you like this..." box, you've got another picture of *Partners in Time*, yet you mention *Paper Mario* for Gamecube. Why?

6) In the *Pokemon Trozei* review, you put one of the screenshots into the If You Like This area, where you actually recommend *Meteos*. Start banging your heads on the table in shame.

Now, who is it that's going to get the lumps?
James Meller, via virtual letter

***Ah yes. The Top 10* Mario Kart *tracks feature. Apologies, everyone. We had all sorts of trouble with that, and it was a nasty deadline, and, well, one thing led to another, and here we are. You should have heard Martin when the issue came back from the printers - little old ladies three miles down the road put their hands over their ears and said "well! I've never heard such language". Those responsible have been, shall we say, 're-educated'. With spoons.* Ed**



SO TELL ME THIS...

Questions answered, just as nature intended.

Why has Dr. Kitts gone from the mag? I believe it's because it's all online. But there are a lot of people like myself who are not online, so that's no help to us.
Roland Jenner, Kent

Dr. Kitts isn't online. He was retired with extreme prejudice due to offing one patient too many. It's really not a pretty story.

1. Is there any chance of bringing back your Game On! feature?
2. Are you going to do a Top 10 DS games bit, like you have for the GBA?
3. Why is Fire Emblem *(best GBA game ever) not in the Top 10 GBA games bit?*
Dan Peachey, email

1. Anything's possible, if there's definitely the demand for it. Send some ideas in, everyone!
2. We've shoehorned a top 10 DS games into the Directory this issue, which will be expanded next month.
3. We thought there were other, better games. But it is great, though.

Now that you rate DS games by a percentage, what do you give Mario Kart DS*, as it was 5 out of 5 and was clearly better than the legendary* Super Mario Kart *for the SNES. It should have an even higher score than that!*
Sam Rose, Bingham

Running it through the NGC Score-U-Later, I reckon 94%.

I have an important question for you guys to answer for me: why did you give Starfox Adventures *a mere 72%? Was it because Rare went to Microsoft?*
Sandy Smith, Yorkshire

Aaargh! Are you living in 2002 or something?

1. Where is Tim Weaver nowadays?
2. Should I buy Resident Evil 4*?*
Bernard Rossiter, Colchester

***1. Tim's editing* XboxWorld 360.**
2. If you buy ANY game, it should be* Resident Evil 4. *There's nothing finer.



NGC TOP 100

THE BEST GAMECUBE GAMES YOUR MONEY CAN BUY…

WHY YOU NEED IT!



Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide! It's got:

- **Our 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **Details of which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more, you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you…?**
- **A brief description of each game, so if you don't have the relevant back issue, you can still find out the most important things about it.**
- **Highlighted games, which go into a little more detail. As the list gets updated, the highlights will also change.**



1 RESIDENT EVIL 4 — 97

CAPCOM ■ NGC/104

What, no zombies? What's going on? Something spectacular, that's what. This instalment takes the *Resi* series to the next level, with unprecedented amounts of innovation. Gone are the three-day-long animations of doors opening and in comes this new, far more dynamic game.

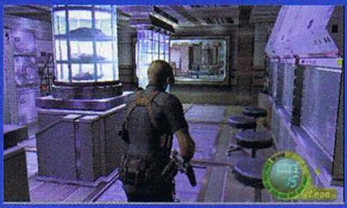
NGC STAR GAME











2 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/81

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Pixar flick and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, but this is as close to art as games have got.

NGC STAR GAME







3 METROID PRIME — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/76

Looks absolutely incredible and there's no slowdown, despite the huge, incredibly detailed environments. The action is varied and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play.

NGC STAR GAME



4 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE 96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story about vandalism and poisonous brown slime. Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. It's everything you never knew you always wanted.







5 METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES 94

NINTENDO ■ NGC/101

Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran as she switches between dimensions to save the Luminoth from the Ing. The story is enriched by the logs you find, and Samus has useful new weapons and abilities. The landscapes aren't as varied and awe-inspiring as *Prime's*, but that's our only complaint.



6 MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! 93

NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pick-up boxes, bizarre weapons from slippery bananas to green shells, giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lot of fun.







7 F-ZERO GX 92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

This is a blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep up the pace without getting framerate jitters. You'll never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would have been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?



8 PIKMIN 2 92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has shown himself to be less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to Earth for a longer session of collecting treasure, along with two new types of Pikmin to help them. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original.







9 SOUL CALIBUR 2 91

NAMCO ■ NGC/85

Excellent, fast-paced fighting. Weapon Master mode is your key to unlocking the eight hidden characters, but the real star of the show isn't hidden. Namco has dropped in Link for the Gamecube version, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.



10 TIMESPLITTERS 2 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/73

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'Splitters. This means shooting things. A lot. Your weapons are timezone-appropriate, letting you wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future. The Multiplayer mode is the icing on the cake. You'll love every second of this.





TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2
Cute-looking turn-based strategy with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 WARIO WARE TWISTED!
Takes the template laid down by *Wario Ware*, then adds a tilt-sensitive cartridge. You'll play it until you're sick.

3 WARIO WARE
Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep coming back to.

4 MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA
An RPG with puzzle and platform elements, starring our two top plumbers.

5 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
Undoubtedly one of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.

6 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level design ever.

7 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
It's the same as before – catch 'em all and send 'em into battle – but it's still the most entertaining RPG ever.

8 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
Nabs the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions and if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.

9 METROID FUSION/ ZERO MISSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games: a sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing level of difficulty.

10 GUNSTAR FUTURE HEROES
Treasure makes old-school shooting seem like the freshest thing on earth.

DIRECTORY

The best Gamecube games around

11 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

All your Nintendo favourites get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have ludicrous amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.

12 HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE 91

UBISOFT ■ NGC/91

Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change. Despite a new chapter structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and have few new goals apart from hybridising crops. Well, such is life, but at least you get to do a bit of milking.

13 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Bald, barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly, but how you go about it is up to you. This is freeform gaming at its finest.

14 MARIO POWER TENNIS 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/104

If you stick with it and learn the ins and outs of the power shots, you're left with an incredibly tactical game. It levels the field, making it a stage where the most seasoned veteran can take on the most casual gamer and still have a closely fought match.

15 PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME 91

UBISOFT ■ NGC/90

Ubisoft shows other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey, but it all reeks of quality.

16 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

With Mario's unique ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what it does best – creating unique games.

17 FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/114

This RPG favours brains over brawn, and it features a large cast of engaging characters that you'll really grow to care about. In addition, you'll get to fight your way through some truly tactical battles. Engaging and emotional, this game will slowly but surely get you hooked.



18 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

A few tiny framerate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy and looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is magic.

19 BATTALION WARS 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/113

With all the hallmarks of the brilliant *Advance Wars*, *Battalion Wars* perfectly balances action with strategy. Commanding armies over vast, detailed landscapes with total control, you'll be thoroughly addicted by the awesome gameplay and vibrant graphics.

20



VIEWTIFUL JOE 90

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

Some people love the unusual look; some people hate it. Either way, get past the cel shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only add to the feel, letting you pull off amazing combos. Some of the puzzles are illogical, which can be frustrating, but its elegant design and nice touches will still win you over.

21 SECOND SIGHT 90

CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97

Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. Telekinetic powers produce some intriguing gameplay and the compelling plot and quality cutscenes are engaging. Superbly produced, this is a memorable game.

22 METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES 90

KONAMI ■ NGC/91

A superb stealth/action adventure with a healthy pedigree. A great story combined with revamped graphics make this old Playstation title blossom on the Gamecube. With superb voice acting and music, this is a good game that should be in your collection.

23 BURNOUT 2 90

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great and it's wonderfully fast. And then there is the crashing. When you've had fun roaring around the streets, you can beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible. Accessible and entertaining.

24 WARIO WARE INC: MEGA PARTY GAMES 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/97

A quickfire succession of hilarious five-second minigames are blasted at you and up to three friends. With tasks like nose picking, cat poking and banana peeling, it's original, outlandishly quirky and very good fun. This comes thoroughly recommended, but not by cats.

TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
This is a tour-de-force of everything that good gaming should be. An absolute delight.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN
Good looking with trickier puzzles and, ahem, more 'mature' content.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Luigi buys a mansion and finds it's haunted. It's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT
Simply put, it's bongo brilliance.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES



MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as it ever did, but now it's rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun that rockets along.

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching pile-ups.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

25 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 1 & 2 90

SEGA ■ NGC/78

This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, numbers and bashing crates. Note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one! 2) Third-party memory cards are prone to corrupt with this.

26 1080° AVALANCHE 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trial modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off for months.

27 NBA STREET V3 90

EA ■ NGC/104

Think *Space Jam* meets *NBA Jam* meets EA's *NBA Street* and you're pretty much there. For the Gamecube incarnation, EA heaped in a load of Nintendo characters. This is entertaining arcade basketball with all the quirks of Nintendo. What more do you need?

28 ANIMAL CROSSING 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/98

Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full cartoon farming experience can now be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow, improving your house, filling the museum and getting a life prove very addictive.

29 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS 90

SEGA ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll change your life," our RPG fanatic assures us. The black holes in the universe of your quest for missing moonstones are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping, although it looks a bit dated now.

30



CONFLICT: DESERT STORM 2 90

SCI ■ NGC/86

Set during the first Gulf War, this team-based shooter is superior to the original *Conflict: Desert Storm* in every way – it looks better, sounds better and plays better, and there's more of everything too! There's a completely new aspect to this one as well – you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of daring heroics as you try to save each member of your team.

31 WORMS 3D 90

SEGA ■ NGC/87

You know the score – you have four worms that must kill all the other worms. The special weapons are still crazy (sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade), but the real difference is that, being 3D, it's harder to hit your targets, affecting your strategies for worm slaughter.

32 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off a dark, shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls, and when that drops to the bottom… There are a few weaknesses in the combat but, other than that, this is survival horror that spans 20 centuries and is nearly perfect.

33 LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS 89
NINTENDO ■ NGC/102

This is an obscure *Zelda* game that's pretty hard on the pockets – in multiplayer mode, each of the four players needs a GBA and link cable. Nonetheless, it's great fun, very amusing and would have scored more highly if the best bit of the Japanese version – *Tetra's Trackers* – had been included.

34 RESIDENT EVIL 89
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore, then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are a tad annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

35 SPLINTER CELL 89
UBISOFT ■ NGC/81

Only Sam Fisher and his various high-tech gadgets – like sticky bombs and camera disruptors – stand between terrorists and the Free World. It's the usual stealth-'em-up stuff, but done with a fair degree of flair and polish, although the 'three alarms and you're out' rule can become annoying.

36 CONFLICT: DESERT STORM 89
SCI ■ NGC/80

This is a rare breed: a multi-platform release that's about as far from the 'lazy port' title as you could possibly hope. This version has been fully optimised for the Gamecube. *Conflict: Desert Storm* is great fun and intensely tactical. The multiplayer is cracking good fun as well.

37 SSX 3 89
EA ■ NGC/87

Snowboard around one giant mountain, entering races or showing off tricks. Complete all three peaks and you'll get the chance to spend 15-30 minutes tricking your way down to the bottom. The framerate can be glitchy, and it's not quite as free-roaming as it initially seems, but it's a superb game.

38 DONKEY KONGA 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on-screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer makes it worthwhile.

39 PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN 88
UBISOFT ■ NGC/102

The Prince is older and his game's got more 'mature' (so, scantily-clad ladies and smart-arsed comments have been dropped in). It's still great to look at and great to play, with trickier puzzles than the first game. Although the fighting is a bit dodgy, the rest of the game more than outweighs that problem.

40 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005 88
EA ■ NGC/98

This is a big game. You'll probably find lost tribes in there if you play for long enough, though you won't see them if you have other interests – you know, like a job or a life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from Namco.

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types, pounding each other's faces in: just what we've always wanted!

VIEWTIFUL JOE
Absolutely spectacular 2D-yet-not-2D side-scrolling single-player fighter.

DEF JAM: VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2
There's more of the same inventive gameplay, without any substantial changes to the successful formula.

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES
Samus Aran takes on the deadly Ing in this solid sequel.

TIMESPLITTERS 2
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT
A great update, though not the revolution that was promised.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks amazing, and it doesn't have any of those boring on-foot sections.

41 LUIGI'S MANSION 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's too darn short. Apart from that, his escapades in the newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and *Ghostbusters*. The little man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

42 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88



SEGA ■ NGC/67

The first ingenious update of the old classic *Marble Madness* sticks monkeys in balls, and it's up to you to roll them around bizarre landscapes, collecting bananas, balancing on perilous ledges and racing to beat the clock. It's addictive stuff, but if the main game isn't enough, there are loads of minigames too. These include obvious ball games like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

43 TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT 88
EA ■ NGC/105

This wasn't the revolution that was promised. Instead, it just gave *TimeSplitters 2* a bit of a spring clean. The game has been gorgeously designed and it's packed with juicy extras. The trademark humour is still in place, it's fantastic fun and the multiplayer mode is as great as you'd expect it to be.

44 NBA STREET V2 88
EA ■ NGC/84

This is basketball with EA's successful *Street* template. You just don't need a serious basketball sim in your collection – this one is stacks of fun, and unless real-life stats are your thing, *NBA Street* has got it all. Three-on-three action, combos and special moves are all crammed into a very fun game.

45 DONKEY KONGA 2 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/108

A second chance to get tendonitis. The songs may be cover versions, the menus may be pretty poor and there aren't enough mini games, but this is more of the same bongo and beats action that we all loved the first time around. Just don't play Solo mode in a crowded room: you'll look like a moron.

46 NHL 2006 88
EA ■ NGC/112

EA has made some big changes this time around, taking the arcade-friendly approach that made the *NHL* series such a hit in the first place back on the Sega Mega Drive. We loved it then and we love it now – with real-time ice trails, the rink has never looked so good.

47 DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT 87
NINTENDO ■ NGC/103

Get the bongos out, it's time to change your gaming habits. Gone are the days of using the D-pad for platformers. Who needs them when you've got bongos? This might sound odd, but it all makes sense in practice. Be warned: you'll need a Radox bath to soothe your aching arm muscles by the end of it.

48 MADDEN NFL 2005 87
EA ■ NGC/99

The main change to this instalment is the inclusion of the hit stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that, and a few tweaks to defensive plays and Franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual, with all the usual stats and player updates you'd expect.

49 DEF JAM: VENDETTA 87
EA ■ NGC/82

Famous rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Start off as a rookie and fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, and then you'll have the pick of the ladies – though their blokes won't be too happy. Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

50 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67

Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it – but it's such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds, stunts and a huge range of locations. Come on guys, this is Tony Hawk – before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

51 LOST KINGDOMS 2 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81

Although nowhere near as good as *Zelda* and *PSO*, *Lost Kingdoms 2* is a beautiful-looking card-based RPG – statophiles are going to love building up their decks, collecting new cards to add to it and crunching numbers. It's nicely broken up into a series of small and easily digestible pieces.

52 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87
LUCASARTS ■ NGC/68

Without a doubt the best *Star Wars* game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note that the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

53 VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 87
CAPCOM ■ NGC/105

The original *Viewtiful Joe* wowed us all with its original mixture of 2D and 3D fighting. This instalment is more of the same in terms of gameplay, but there have been some slight tweaks, like the inclusion of Sylvia, a new playable character whose different FX powers alter the style of the puzzles.

54 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL 86
UBISOFT ■ NGC/90

Wonderful-looking action adventure that has you finding rare animals and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning and the speech and effects make the grade too. Even the mini games are fun! The world is huge and detailed, but it's slightly easy and won't last as long as you'll want it to.

55 FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES 86
SQUARE ■ NGC/91

Multiplayer RPG for up to four players, but each one will need a GBA and link cable, making this expensive if you're going to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be a bit random and the players' shared air bubble can be claustrophobic, but all in all, this is good looking and ambitious.

56 WARIO WORLD 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/83

Punching, pounding, portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N). The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game, and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

DIRECTORY

The best Gamecube games around

57 BURNOUT 86

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

This was a killer racer in its day, but was massively improved upon by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth framerate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2*, because it's got all that and so much more. *Burnout* itself is worth a look though, and won't disappoint.

58 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG 86

SEGA ■ NGC/87

Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought that rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

59 PIKMIN 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

Only Shigsy could have come up with a real-time strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth is a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. It looks as wonderful as it plays, but it's just too short.

60 XIII 86

UBISOFT ■ NGC/88

Unusual graphics, cel-shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (there are guns that literally go 'bam'...) set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace, and when that's all over there's a great Multiplayer mode.

61 POKÉMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/113

Pokémon XD is all about 'snagging', which basically means filling your Pokédex with 'mon that have been sneakily snatched from other trainers during battle. It sounds simple, but the strategic combat is as addictive as ever and beautifully realised, making this a must for Pokémon fans.

62 NFL 2K3 86

SEGA ■ NGC/79

Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing together effectively. However, the enormous franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American football, if a tad out of date.

63 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING 86

EA ■ NGC/87

Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this decent hack'n'slash takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom via some nifty spider action.

64 NBA LIVE 2004 86

EA ■ NGC/88

Underneath the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected, impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats, facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved and you've got more offensive options too. It's soulless but slick.

65 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO 85

CAPCOM ■ NGC/78

Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Great cutscenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old *Resi* atmosphere (a coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere then...).

66 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR 85

NINTENDO ■ NGC/95

For a *Mario* game, there's a surprising lack of Nintyness in many of the courses – it's just not as wacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, *Tiger Woods*. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

67 IKARUGA 85

ATARI ■ NGC/80

Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the Easy setting. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles, and you have to hit the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all. A splendid space crusade.

68



FIFA 2004 85

EA ■ NGC/87

Continuing the healthy rivalry between *FIFA* and *Pro Evo*, *FIFA 2004* is the best football sim you can get on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players, teams and stadia for the ultimate in realism. The free kick system has been tweaked, and the corner kicks are menu-driven. It's all here in a beautiful version of the beautiful game.

69 EXTREME G 3 85

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

This is an underrated gem. It's very, very fast, the tracks are huge and well-designed, the bikes are cool and the inventive weapons are stunning to use. This time there's an upgrade system too, with bike and weapon enhancements available, and this adds a much-needed tactical element to the game.

70 SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY 84

UBISOFT ■ NGC/106

This was the game that was supposed to give the *Splinter Cell* series a kick up the arse. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. What did happen was a thorough spit and polish job – for example, the levels are no longer linear – and as a result it feels much fresher. The addition of a co-op mode is also very welcome.

71 SPIDER-MAN 2 84

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96

Here's a game that actually makes you feel like a superhero. Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll feel the joy of being Spider-Man, doing whatever a spider can. The only drawbacks are that it doesn't look particularly pretty and the missions are quite limited, but it's still an amazing experience.

72 KILLER 7 84

CAPCOM ■ NGC/109

Capcom's highly original, inventive and downright weird adventure is certainly interesting. You play Harman, the man with a squad of deadly assassins inside his head. You can choose between seven of his different personalities – each with their own specific abilities – in your quest to defeat the Heaven's Smiles.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own a Gamecube in itself.

HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE
Not your traditional RPG, this is an endearing, farming treat of a game.

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE
The thinking man's RPG and the best strategy title on the Gamecube.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



RESIDENT EVIL 4
Cranks up the action, taking the *Resident Evil* series to new heights.

HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

SECOND SIGHT
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the team that brought you *Timesplitters 2*.

MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Dark, psychological horror – exclusive to Gamecube.

73 JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH 84

VIVENDI ■ NGC/89

Dredd Vs Death sees the famous Mega City One come to life. Sadly, it's not an especially long life. While it lasts, you get to play as ol' chinny himself: solving crimes, nailing crooks and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot on and the fiddly controls are the only letdown.

74 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/93

The Pokémon series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters. There's an awful lot of fighting here and you'll need a GBA Pokémon game to get the most out of Colosseum mode, but if you're a fan, you'll love it.

75 TALES OF SYMPHONIA 84

NAMCO ■ NGC/100

This is very much a traditional RPG, and a very good-looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the locations are all, without exception, stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will have you gnawing your arm off, too.

76 RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC 84

UBISOFT ■ NGC/78

Rayman somehow manages to create a fun platformer, despite the fact that he seems to be stuck in an age when this kind of thing was revolutionary. However, it's bright, it's solid and it's got some enjoyable mini games. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right.

77 ISS2 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68

This series was untouchable for a while, but then EA found out and made its *FIFA* games loads better, leaving the Gamecube *ISS* behind in its wake. *ISS2* is a good game with great commentary, but we were expecting much more of it and, unfortunately, these expectations weren't met.

78



STAR WARS: REBEL STRIKE 83

LUCASARTS ■ NGC/88

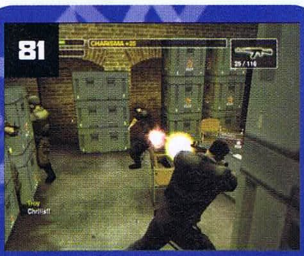
Star Wars is all about dogfights with screaming TIE fighters and taking on vast Star Destroyers, not poncing around on foot. Unfortunately, *Rebel Strike* introduces these pedestrian sections, and they're a bit of a trudge, ruining the excitement of the rest of the game. However, like its predecessors, it looks and sounds great, and the two-player Rogue Leader mode is outstanding, bringing the thrills of the movies to life.

79 SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER 83

TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94

Don't be fooled by the name – this is very silly! For £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. The killing can get a bit relentless, and you can forget about stealth and fancy gadgets, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's your man.

80 BATEN KAITOS 83
NAMCO ■ NGC/103
Role-playing adventure with card-based battles. This game is unique and delivers a wonderful, magical and fantastical world – the stunning vistas, towns and interiors are awash with lavish colours. Even the card system works well. Unfortunately, it's let down by some stilted and painfully wooden voice acting.

81


FREEDOM FIGHTERS 83
EA ■ NGC/86
Although much less serious in tone and delivery than *Conflict: Desert Storm 2*, this is still a highly enjoyable squad-based third-person shooter. Unfortunately, there are some issues with the controls – aiming in first-person mode is pretty much impossible – but if you look beyond these issues, you'll find an absorbing and, most importantly, fun game that offers both straight-up blasting thrills alongside more tactical elements.

82 FIFA 2003 83
EA ■ NGC/75
Having had the football crown stolen by *Pro Evo*, EA sought to re-establish itself as the king of the football game. The result was a remarkably in-depth and well-presented version of virtual soccer. Along with the correct names and kit, the movement of the players and flow of the game are vastly improved.

83 SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR 82
SEGA ■ NGC/112
You take control of Spartan, a conveniently named Spartan warrior, as he sets out to dismember every single Roman in the world. With up to 200 people on-screen at any given time, this is hectic, violent and bloody, and just how war should be. With historical accuracy put to one side, this is great fun.

84 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 82
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100
This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and Story mode unfortunately features a lot of Bam Margera, so if you find him annoying, there's a good chance you won't like this. The rest is great, keeping the classic *Tony Hawk* gameplay and including parts of the first three games – with a timer!

85 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 82
SEGA ■ NGC/78
If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys probably carry guns and want you dead. Inside balls, however (a monkey's natural habitat), the little creatures are an absolute delight. The format is the same as the first in the series, and there are new mini games and over 100 levels.

86 METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM 82
VIVENDI ■ NGC/88
As hard as Ray Winstone in a steel top hat, this robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the training level. You take control of a small yellow robot called Glitch, and your task is to defeat a rock-hard army of robots. The camera can be awkward, though, and the landscape hazards are unfairly harsh.

TOP 10 DS GAMES


ADVANCE WARS DUAL STRIKE
Quite possibly the most addictive game ever made. Turn-based strategy made sexy - and then some.

MARIO KART DS
The best Mario Kart ever made. Big,beautiful, and with online play. Sheer fun.

NINTENDOGS
Amazingly cute pet simulator that takes full advantage of the unique hardware of the DS. Comes complete with hats and miniature helicopters.

WARIO WARE TOUCHED
Quickfire minigames that'll make you laugh loud and long.

SUPER MARIO 64 DS
Slightly awkward to control, but otherwise superb.

CASTLEVANIA DAWN OF SORROW
The best one since *Symphony of the Night*. And that's saying something.

METEOS
One of the best puzzle games we've ever played.

SONIC RUSH
The finest Sonic game of recent years – put a little hedgehog back in your life.

FEEL THE MAGIC: XY/XX
Date a girl by winning minigames. Plum.

MARIO AND LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME
Superb sequel to Superstar Saga, with brain-melting two-screen puzzles. Mint.

87 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III: CARD REVOLUTION 82
SEGA ■ NGC/94
This is a new idea and a new direction for *PSO* card-based battling. You now have to choose a side (the Arkz or the Heroside) and do battle with dice and cards. It's best if you're familiar with the original *PSO* though and, unfortunately, you'll need a broadband adapter to play this.

88 SSX ON TOUR 82
EA ■ NGC/114
More downhill slick tricks and stunts, in the same vein as *SSX 3*. This time you can speed down the slopes on skis, and there are over 100 tough challenges fo you to complete. It's demanding, enjoyable and satisfying, but it won't give fans of the series anything new.

89 THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT 82
EA ■ NGC/89
Having spent the previous game imprisoned in their own home, this instalment sees your virtual people released into the real world to work. It still doesn't exactly look brilliant or sound that great, but as with all games that have no absolute goal or plot, it will last you for a very, very long time indeed.

90 NFL STREET 2 81
EA ■ NGC/103
This game tears up the rulebook and gives you licence to run like hell, boasting a new ability that lets you run around the walls, *Prince of Persia*-style, to gain height when catching or passing a human pile-up. A quality package, though probably without mass appeal outside the US.

91 OCARINA OF TIME MASTER QUEST 81
NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
This game is nothing short of a bargain. Although the graphics haven't been updated, that doesn't mean the gameplay isn't up to scratch. This version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles from the original *OOT*. Forget the graphics (it's an old game) and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

92 TIGER WOODS 06 81
EA ■ NGC/112
Tiger Woods's almost perfect swing system has had a few tweaks for 2006. The ball is now controlled by the C-stick and putting is now on the analogue stick. Despite being tricky to get used to, the classic *Tiger Woods* gameplay remains intact, making this one of the best golf sims available.

93 TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND 81
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/114
Skate fans can kiss goodbye to their social lives when they get their hands on this massive, sprawling game. There are loads of missions to complete, an optional BMX to try, a vast Los Angeles-themed skatepark, and no loading screens to distract you from your grinding.

94 AGGRESSIVE INLINE 81
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/72
A top-class rollerblading sim. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means you can pull off moves like swinging around lampposts. There's even a Career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is rubbish and the graphics are a little bland.

95 THE SIMS 81
EA ■ NGC/79
Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would: leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. There's no point to it and there are no objectives, but that's life for you – entirely meaningless, but you want to keep doing it anyway.

96 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81
EA ■ NGC/83
Ever wanted to indulge in the life of an F1 driver? Now you can. This is part of EA's *F1* series, but with the addition of an extensive Career mode. There's a series of trials to prove you can handle the F1 disciplines, then you can get on with the racing part, which looks good, shifts well and handles nicely.

97 NHL 2005 80
EA ■ NGC/99
This is a slick, quick game of hockey. The action's quick and the AI and graphics have been improved. However, if you dislike the sport, there simply won't be enough here to convince you that it's worthwhile. For the fans, though, it's easy to learn and you can rack up huge scores. Good fun.

98 CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE 80
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/114
Win World War II all over again in this fast, furious and fun shooter. Okay, so the AI is quite limited and the gameplay a bit too linear, but when you're blasting your way through the frantic and incredibly varied missions, you simply won't have time to notice these flaws.

99 MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE 80
MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier *MKs*, although it's far too easy to get an infinite by button mashing. The lack of ring-outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.

100 BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 80
VIVENDI ■ NGC/81
Endlessly battling goblins and orcs can get a little tedious, but if you've ever played D&D, you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. However, it's a lazy port from PS2, with slowdown and a jittery framerate. Nonetheless, the game still looks a treat and one level has you beating up cowardly lions.



THE NGC BACK PAGE QUIZ

Fancy a sparkly new DS Lite? Answer these questions correctly, and you could win one…





So you've come to the end of the issue: the final page, the end of the papery road. Or, as we like to call it, the **NGC** Brain-Embiggening Test-U-Like Quizbobulator. Because, you see, we want to know that you've fully digested everything you've just read (mentally digested – this mag's not for eatin', as uncle Cletus used to say), and what better way to do that than to test you? Plus, one lucky reader can win a new DS Lite (when it's released, of course). So read on, gentle reader, and good luck. Excelsior! (*What?* – **Ed**)

1. In what is possibly a first for NGC Magazine, we mention dewlaps in this issue. But on what page?

2. "Nice buffing", we said. But which game was said buffing in?

3. "Low resolution hampers accuracy". Unfortunate, for sure, but which game?

4. Which character was described as "nut obsessed"? Clue: it's not Martin, although he's all about the nuts.

5. "It's not going to offer you the strategic wonder of *Advance Wars DS*" – It isn't? What do you mean, it isn't? What isn't?

6. Hilcot-upon-Cheese. Is it real?

7. Who wants "MORE FAIRY BOYS TO CONTROL?"

8. Alex Cooke is a man of many words, some of them not fit for publication in a family magazine. In this issue he wrote these particular words, angrily: "too bloody hard". Which page?

9. If you were best friends with Tom Nook, would you call him:
a) La La La Nookarino, Hey Hey!
b) Pancho De La Twallacka.
c) You Slavedriving Fleabag.

10. "Wackier than Ally McBeal". That'd be difficult, but what game did we say this about?

Bonus Question: Who, in your carefully considered opinion, would be victorious in a fight between Mighty Mouse and Superman?

HOW TO ENTER

Entering is simpler than a soaring sheep in a *Worms* attack. Send your entry on a piece of paper in an envelope, or on a postcard, to:

Quizzy Pop!
NGC Magazine
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth St
Bath
BANES
BA1 2BW

THE RULES

1. Closing date for entries is 10th April 2006.
2. Employees of Future Publishing, their relatives, love interests, pets, and homunculi may not enter. Ever.
3. Whatever happened to Tina S Club, eh? She was lovely.
4. That Nicole Richie is far too skinny.
5. Data incomplete… human blood required! Thus spake the computer.





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